



The Indianapolis Times

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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

The Danger Signal

The public service commission hung up a new red flag of danger to the public interest when that body tossed aside a petition by citizens of Franklin for a new deal on electric rates.

The excuse given is that the people of that city had entered into an agreement with Citizen Jap Jones of Martinsville whereby he would receive compensation if he succeeded in getting relief for its people.

It is now a crime to attack utilities, apparently, for it is well known that, under the tax board, it is almost impossible to get appropriations approved which have for their purpose the spending of tax money to fight high rates charged to citizens.

Theoretically, the commission is correct in its position that no community should be put to the trouble of employing experts to obtain justice. The commission is presumed to take care of the public.

But in practice every city has to fight and fight and fight again to even get concessions, to say nothing of fair play.

It is not of record that the commission stepped forward to interfere with extortionate rates when deflation had reduced the "reproduction" values of every plant in this state.

It is not of record that the commission has inquired into the extortionate charges of operation that are apparent through the fees given to holding companies for services such as the purchase of coal in this city by the electric company at a profit of at least 50 cents a ton to the parent concern.

It is not of record that the commission ever audits any report that is filed by a utility until some burdened community enters its protest and that then the utility companies usually get all the best of it.

So it is necessary for the different communities to get experts to fight their wars. The trouble is that most experts, and this goes for lawyers, auditors and engineers, are under the pay of the utility companies and that the people are handicapped from the start.

The barring of Jap Jones merely throws another obstacle in the way of utility justice. It means that the utility barons do not want any fighters against them. It means that the commission intends to discourage any man from becoming expert in his knowledge of the utility manipulations and practices.

The real danger is that the order is public notice that the utilities have become bigger than the government itself.

It is notice that the time has come for the people to decide whether they will run their own government or continue to assent to the secret domination by the utility group.

Of course, Jones should have known better. The way to get along in this state is to serve these interests, not to fight them.

Labor's Program

Just fifty years ago a little group met in Terre Haute and organized what is now the American Federation of Labor. Today this army of workers, now 3,000,000 strong, opens its fifty-first convention in Vancouver, B. C., in one of its darkest hours.

With 7,000,000 or more jobless men and women facing the third winter of want; with wage cuts menacing living standards gained from years of struggle; with basic industries like coal, oil, lumber, railroads knocking at the government's door for relief; with world problems calling for world remedies, American labor needs all the courage and statesmanship it can muster.

Will it assume leadership?

What is labor's program?

Subject to amendment by the delegates, the executive council report, out today, gives labor's answers.

Its winter emergency program is: The shorter work week and day; employers' responsibility for keeping a minimum force at work; speeding up and extending public works; "strengthening of employment agencies"; extending the compulsory school age; preference for workers with dependents; unemployment aid through private and public funds, federal if necessary. That is a splendid emergency plan.

The A. F. of L. long-time program leads with a plea for a "federal labor board" to "give labor the assistance and service comparable to that given farmers and industry."

This is not antagonistic to the suggestions of Gerald Swope or Senator Robert M. La Follette for an industrial planning board for the whole of industry.

Indeed, the A. F. of L. council bewails the fact that President Hoover has failed to call a national conference to outline such a measure.

"There must be comprehensive planning by all groups that affect each other," the report says. "No one industry can prevent business depression, nor even all industries, unless they work together."

The council is bearish on unemployment insurance. Labor wants jobs, not the dole, we hear. But "if compulsory unemployment insurance is fastened upon our industrial, political and economic life, it will be because industrial ownership and management have failed to preserve work opportunities for working men and women."

Its tax plan is clear. No sales tax! Instead we should tax the great estates through inheritance and gift taxes and, necessary, increase the income taxes on the high brackets.

On international questions, the council's program lacks the world vision of British Labor party's Scarborough program and, indeed, of President William Green's recent interviews. We hear nothing of disarmament, war debt reductions, tariff reduction. It maintains labor's traditional attitude on Philippine independence, and immigration restriction up to 90 per cent of the present quota and non-quota groups.

On the railway situation it takes no sides either for or against the 15 per cent rate increase or the eastern merger plan other than to insist, in case of

M. E. Tracy SAYS:

Silver at 14 to 1 Would Mean
Enormous and Immediate
Wealth for Certain Sec-
tions of This Country.

NEW YORK, Oct. 5.—A hectic fall this, with its plans and preparations for what every one admits will be the hardest winter in years—plans and preparations that go all the way from a silver conference to a pair of second-hand shoes for some poor kid.

Pope Pius asks for a "crusade of mercy" throughout christendom, while the management of the Worth county fair in Georgia announces that it will accept cottonseed, shelled corn, peanuts or fresh eggs for admission.

Premier Pierre Laval of France calls Lord Reading from England to "take up the general position," with money as the chief topic of discussion.

World's champion Max Schmeling, who made \$100,000 in his bout with Strubling, gives \$2,500 for relief, while Judge Dunklee of Denver reduces Mrs. Norman B. Smith's alimony from \$100 to \$60 a month on the ground that her former husband, whose salary has been cut, no longer can afford to pay on the 1929 basis.

Leads to Bankruptcy

WAGES are being cut, prices are being cut, and budgets are being cut, all of which means higher money and an increased hardship for debtors.

By stabilizing the franc at 4 cents, or one fifth of its value, France made it possible for her debtors to pay off at 20 cents on the dollar.

Through tremendous issues of paper money, Germany made it possible for her debtors to pay off at as low a rate as one-tenth of one per cent in some cases.

An overdose of debt generally leads to bankruptcy, or inflation.

Wages Would Rise

SENATOR William E. Borah suggests a conference to stabilize silver at the ratio of fourteen to one with gold. Sixteen to one was all Bryan wanted, but let's not waste time talking about that.

Silver at fourteen to one would mean immediate and enormous wealth for certain sections of this country, and would tend to make money cheaper and more plentiful all along the line.

Wages and prices would rise, for which politicians, labor leaders, and farm relievers would be quick to take credit, and creditors, though getting the exact number of dollars called for by mortgage, or contract, would be short-changed.

Try to Buy Groceries

DURING the last ten years, some of our greatest financiers and statesmen have been arranging settlements whereby nations were bound to pay off debts for the next half century. Does any one imagine that those settlements will stand, that the obligations will stand, that the obligations will not be cancelled, or liquidated through the good old method of inflation?

Here in America, we have loaded the people with debt through high power salesmanship, creating prosperity, as we told each other, with a lot of overdue notes and worthless trumpery to show for it now.

You still can buy an auto, or a phonograph on credit, but just try to buy a winter's supply of groceries.

There not only has been a great expansion of credit, but a great

division of labor.

Another Plan

The Muscle Shoals commission has a "plan" for disposition of the government's great power project. In ten years there have been too many Muscle Shoals "plans" to remember.

This new plan is a three-fold one, it is explained. Through it the commission recommends that the plants be leased—preferably to some farmer-owned and controlled organization—for the manufacture of fertilizer.

As one of the commissioners, when they met in Washington, said the members visited the White House to get their "orders," it is presumed that this is President Hoover's plan.

Congress has settled the Muscle Shoals controversy twice to its entire satisfaction, only to be thwarted by two Presidents.

Congress insisted on government operation; it will insist on that again. And there are those who predict it will succeed this time, the President notwithstanding.

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