



The Indianapolis Times

(A SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER)

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BOYD GURLEY, Editor

ROY W. HOWARD, President

EARL D. BAKER, Business Manager

PHONE—Riley 5551

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

A \$10,000,000 Racket

All the politicians of both parties, from President Hoover down, who are crying federal economy, have been put to the test by a simple bill introduced in congress. The Maas bill proposes to save \$10,000,000 a year by the easy device of abolishing the office of postmaster in all first-class and most second-class postoffices of the country.

The postmaster racket is a form of governmental waste and luxury which the country and the taxpayers can not afford. Each party should pay for its party workers, instead of grabbing a postmaster and a governmental salary while they do virtually no work for the government.

About one-third of the 48,500 postmasters are political appointees of the President, many of them living on doles through the spoils system. Describing the first-class and many of the second-class postoffices, Representative Maas is accurate in stating:

"The actual work in these offices is done by the assistant postmaster or the superintendent of mails, who is an actual civil service employee. The administration of these postoffices goes on regardless of who happens to be holding the office of postmaster.

"The technical knowledge for the actual administration of these postoffices is not possessed by the postmaster, who is appointed merely as a political award.

"The main function apparently expected of the postmasters is to defend the party and to work for re-election of the President who appointed them."

This racket of course was not invented by the Republicans; the Democrats play the same game when they are in power. We use the term "racket" advisedly, meaning a system by which the people are made to pay for something they do not get.

The only strange thing about the Maas bill is that it stops with the upper-class postmasters. It should go on up and include some of the cabinet and sub-cabinet officers who draw government pay for running a party machine and making party speeches.

There is the case of Assistant Postmaster-General Glover, who runs about the country lining up postmasters to campaign for Hoover, on threat of being fired. Postmaster-General Brown, like most of his predecessors, spends much, if not most, of his time as a party manager. The secretary of war and an assistant secretary of the navy find time for party speeches and party work.

We have nothing against these gentlemen, either as individuals or as politicians. But we object to the system by which federal funds are used to subsidize their party work, instead of being used to balance the federal budget, or to pay federal debts, or to feed the unemployed.

We would not interfere with their work. Let the postmaster-general and the secretary of war, for instance, go on with their heavy party work, and let their assistants go on doing their government jobs for them.

Merely dock the postmaster-general and secretary of war for the time they take off from government work—and all other federal executives who are not kept busy on government business.

To talk about government economies and at the same time think at such rackets is ridiculous.

The Tariff Raiders

The vital task of balancing the federal budget is threatened by the tariff lobby. They say they will hold up the tax bill all summer unless they are allowed to attach their tariff riders.

The anti-tariff forces reply that if oil, coal, lumber, and copper tariffs are jammed into the tax bill, they will fight to put 500 other tariff items of their own into the bill.

We happen to oppose a higher tariff, as destructive of business—so proved by the Hawley-Smoot monstrosity, which has destroyed foreign trade, started a world trade war, and prolonged the depression. But that is not the issue here.

Whether higher tariffs are good or bad, they have no place in a tax bill. Most of them are virtual embargoes, which will raise little or no revenue.

If one such tariff is accepted in the tax bill, the way will be open for all the degrading log-rolling which characterizes a tariff bill. That means unscrupulous trading. It means months of delay.

The Democratic leaders in the senate are trying to save the tax bill by fighting off the tariff raiders. The Republican leaders, as usual, are on the tariff side—rule or ruin.

Here is a chance for the President, the bankers, the business men, and all and sundry who have been pleading for prompt passage of an adequate tax bill to balance the budget, to help rescue the bill from the tariff raid.

Wilbur Bedtime Story

Tut, tut, folks! Quite pitying the children of the unemployed. Have done with carpings about lowered living standards, hunger and all that sort of tosh. Give, instead, a rousing Stanford cheer for adversity, led by jolly old yell-leader Ray Lyman Wilbur, secretary of the interior.

The depression is, in fact, a boon to children, Dr. Wilbur told the Conference of Social Work in Philadelphia the other night. Many children now have "better and more suitable food than in past good times." Children's problems are being met "in new and satisfactory ways." "Low prices favor the efforts to blot out slums."

"With prosperity, many parents unload their responsibilities for their children on to others," he said. "With adversity, the home takes its more normal place."

The trouble, it seems, isn't hunger. It's the hives. "My diagnosis is that our present civilization is broken out with the hives," he said. "Hives are as transitory as they are annoying, if proper living is had and appropriate remedies taken. National emergencies force realities upon us."

But not upon Wilbur.

Singing in the Bathtub

That men like to sing while bathing long has been recognized as one of the harmless but puzzling idiosyncrasies of modern life. Now, at last, comes Dr. Vern O. Knudsen, professor of physics on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California, to explain that this happens largely because the ordinary bathroom is so beautifully resonant.

The man who has no illusions whatever about his vocal gifts may, therefore, be pardoned if he warbles loudly while standing in the shower. The very laws of physics are on his side.

Can be blamed for taking advantage of them?

The Indianapolis Times

(From The New York Herald-Tribune)

Mindful of the sordid and disgraceful history of the Civil war pension laws, the United States was careful when it entered the World war to provide in advance for just and generous indemnification of those really disabled, and true dependents of those killed in the nation's service.

The purpose was a double one; first, to make certain that what the nation owed to the men called upon for genuine sacrifice should not be frittered away, as had happened after the Civil war, upon frauds, pension grabbers and political dolemen; second, to prevent a repetition of the scandals which for a generation had debased our government, done an incalculable injury to the country, and supplied one of the darkest chapters in our political history.

With enlightened legislation enacted in advance, it was supposed both the nation and the veterans with just claims upon it would be protected from the shameless political treasury raiding which had done so much injury to both after the Civil war.

The expectation has not been borne out. Today, even more rapidly than after the Civil war, the politicians have driven one breach after another through the war relief legislation, until what ought to be a system for the equitable recompense of those disabled in service, or for the support of those dependent upon men who sacrificed their lives, is becoming a system for political doles to people with no real claim upon the government at all.

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