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THE INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

IN spite of persistent rumors that President Roosevelt's plan for reorganization of government departments will cripple the federal trade commission, the federal power commission and other independent agencies, or subject them to political control, there seems to be little justification for such fear.

The President has said nothing to indicate he favors such course, even in the face of urgent need for government economy, and the plan does violence to too many of the principles on which his theory of government is based to be credible.

The federal power commission was removed from control of the executive department only two years ago, after a record so unsatisfactory that congress was practically unanimous in favor of the change.

Its record since then has been clearly better, even with commissioners appointed by a President unsympathetic to the purpose of the water power act. It waits only appointment of the most competent men available and extension of power to become the valuable agency of government it was intended to be.

As for the trade commission, its past contributions have been so valuable, its future possibilities are so endless, that its destruction could appeal only to a spokesman for selfish interests.

It is the only body in Washington that can be expected to investigate and make public facts contrary to wishes of the administration in power. It carried on the utilities investigation, so that would not have hesitated to stop it had it possessed the power.

Less spectacular, but equally valuable as a matter of dollars and cents to the consuming public, is the commission's work preventing corrupt and unlawful business practices. It is the consumers' only advocate in the government. It has saved them hundreds of millions of dollars.

Federal licensing of corporations is proposed and no branch of the government except the trade commission is qualified to handle this important and extensive job. A decision will be made soon as to whether attempts to prevent competition in business shall be continued or whether planned economy shall be substituted.

The trade commission's economic staff, gathered together over a long period of years and trained as a fact-finding agency, is vitally necessary in either case.

As a matter of economy, nothing is to be gained by destruction of the trade commission. Its annual appropriation during its entire period of existence has averaged \$1,196,393.

It showed the government how to save many times this sum in income taxes only last week, and in its entire lifetime its savings are too large to calculate.

INVESTIGATING MORGAN

THE authority of the senate investigating committee to inquire into its investment business is questioned by J. P. Morgan & Co., according to Counsel Peccor's report.

A grave mistake on the part of the Morgan firm. Nothing could be more likely to inspire public distrust than an attempt to evade a legitimate official inquiry.

Perhaps the firm's lawyers have found a technical legal basis for resisting the senate inquiry. For that matter, perhaps the Morgan company has nothing to conceal.

But the people of the United States will not feel that the government has investigated American banking if the examination does not include the Pooch-bah of all the banks, J. P. Morgan & Co.

Under ordinary circumstances, any obstruction by the Morgans might be effective. But these are not ordinary times. Too many banks have failed; too much financial racketeering has been uncovered; too many involved and circuitous spider webs of control over interlocking banks, security affiliates and corporation directorates have been revealed, to stop the senate investigation now.

The public is determined to get at the whole truth. President Roosevelt and the administration, unlike the Hoover regime, want to put an end to secrecy where the people's money is involved.

On what ground the Morgan firm challenges the committee's authority is not clear from the published reports. But, if the company actually has found a legal loophole, it will not escape investigation. The senate can grant any necessary extension of authority to the committee to see the thing through.

One of the fallacies of earlier reform proposals was that they stopped with commercial banks and the diversion of affiliates. Fortunately, it more generally is understood now that the need for effective restriction and regulation of private banks is as great, or even greater, than that of commercial banks.

The private banks, in their secrecy of operation, have been pretty much a law unto themselves. This can not be allowed to continue.

A banking investigation and a bank reform law which failed to cover the private banks would be a joke.

MAN'S DESIRE FOR ADVENTURE

IT is doubtful if any airplane flight yet projected is more a "stunt" flight than the hop over Mount Everest which a group of British airmen will attempt shortly.

The last few years certainly have brought us enough flights whose actual dollar-and-cents utility was difficult to discover. Yet almost all of them have had some practical value, however small.

The day of regular transoceanic air service, for example, is undoubtedly nearer because of

all the recent ocean flights, ill-advised and luckless as many of them were.

But this flight over Mount Everest is something else again. No air line ever will be established over that wild, storm-racked mountain chain; no knowledge of a plane's action under extremely adverse conditions will be gained that could not be gained just as well elsewhere.

Whether the flight succeeds or fails, aviation will go on just about as before.

Yet there is something about this flight appeals to one's imagination. Perhaps it is the simple fact that it is so useless—and so perilous. Men who insist on risking their lives for no reason except the inner feeling of satisfaction that comes from doing the different and the dangerous always will command our respect, even though they sometimes make us feel that they are acting foolishly.

The human animal, when you stop to think about it, is a queer and unexplainable creature. Fix him up in comfort and safety as thoroughly as you can, he is more likely than not to wriggle out of it and try to break his neck against some ice-bound gale-swept crag on the other side of the globe.

Let him know that on an inaccessible point of the map there is a sea that never has been sailed, or a mountain that never has been climbed, or a danger that never has been faced successfully, and he will not rest until he has tackled it.

Why should this be? Heaven knows. There is something in man that makes it impossible for him to take a dare.

This causes a good many unnecessary deaths, from year to year, and leads us stay-at-homes to wag our beards gravely; but it also gives us a glimpse, every so often, of sheer magnificence.

MRS. BOOLE UNCONVINCED

MRS. ELLA A. BOOLE, president of the W. C. T. U., cries still for the impossible—universal abstinence from alcohol.

Fred G. Clark, head of the Crusaders, an anti-prohibition organization which yet wants to see the sale of beer launched in a way to prevent the old-time abuses of the "liquor traffic," sent a letter to Mrs. Boole and other dry leaders, asking their co-operation in the interest of temperance.

Clark assumed that the world "temperance" in Mrs. Boole's organization meant what it said, which it once did. But Mrs. Boole

is not so sincere want to get rid of the evils of alcohol, we challenge you to inaugurate a campaign for total abstinence as the only safe method."

The campaign for total abstinence is the campaign which has wrecked itself, after all but wrecking the nation and destroying a great part of the spirit of temperance which existed before Volstead.

Contrasting with the blind refusal of some other "dry" leaders to see truth when it stacks to the heavens is the opinion of the emancipated dry, Stanley High. He declared recently:

"One of the major handicaps in the current dry appraisal of the situation is this ignorance or unwillingness to face the fact that the prohibition law has ceased to be a binding force upon a large body of the very best citizens, whose support in the success of any other social measure would be considered indispensable."

High called for a modern, not a mid-Victorian, leadership of youth toward temperance.

Fortunately for the country, High's voice seems to be the voice in which the dry masses of the country have been speaking for months. In this he is a follower, not a leader.

The former dry masses seem to be heading right. The women among them. We can not believe that many women will follow such leaders as Mrs. Boole, whose unreasoning insistence upon the impossible has been discredited so thoroughly.

A GREAT WORK FOR BOYS

BOY SCOUT week, an annual event, is drawing to a close, with realization brought home to thousands of our citizens that the movement is one that is accomplishing great good.

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The day of regular transoceanic air service,

co-operation with the Council of Parents and Teachers.

Their problems are helping the handicapped child before he becomes a problem in the schools, providing for the undernourished in the schools.

What is the significance? The school problem has become one with the home problem. The women will ask:

"We have no money? Why? How was it spent?"

They are going to know why. They are going to see that the schools—their children—are the last to suffer in economic crises, instead of the first.

They are going to demand the highest paid teachers who understand child psychology, instead of the poorest who "just are making a living."

Their children are going to be taught things in education they should know. They are going to have the foundation of health and the ability to think for themselves, instead of following the herd as the course of least resistance.

THE NEW RIVER DECISION

A CLEAR right of way for federal utility regulation stretches ahead of the Roosevelt administration.

The federal water power act is constitutional, a federal district court in Virginia just has found in the New York case. The federal courts now see in the commerce clause of the Constitution powers sufficiently broad to permit recapture, determination of investment, amortization from excess profits supervision of securities, and other broad regulatory requirements in the public interest.

To the electric rate payer this a decision of tremendous importance. It removes a serious obstacle in the way of fair, courageous, federal control over the important water power projects of the country.

Such control can mean millions of dollars saved in electric light bills and in taxes where recapture is contemplated. To the purchaser of securities, it affords new protection.

The New River case has hung like a cloud over the federal power commission for eight of the thirteen years of its existence. A series of different commissions struggled with the problem, but stood firm in their contention that, if the water power act meant anything, it meant control over this sort of development.

Other government officials were not always so alive to the public interest. Former Attorney-General Mitchell, of the Hoover cabinet, at one time advised the commission not to insist on its regulatory powers and questioned constitutionality of the water power act. At one time he had the power to veto the bill.

After reading your paper and others, and knowing our immense indebtedness to be far more than our assessed valuation and having a vast horde to feed and care for, it amazes me to think of the gold that has been shipped out of this country. Now we are locking the door after the horse has been stolen.

Can any one get us out of this great depression? The time is here when we should all work together, lay all issues aside and work for our country alone. In unity there is strength and power.

We should put our shoulders to the wheel and push and see that no one is pulling back. If our learned congressmen would all try and lay all politics and prejudices aside and work together for the good and upbuilding of this great and wealthy country, we surely would be in far better condition.

When President Roosevelt has assembled a party for the power commission in full sympathy with the purpose of the act, the country may expect the very material benefits which the power act was framed to confer and for which the people have waited so long.

Patients in government hospital for the insane in Washington demand more jigsaw puzzles. But plenty of jigsaw puzzle fans still are at large.

Beer bung boom boosts business in Berwind, W. Va. Buying bigger and better bungs brings bright burst of balm to the bank-burdened.

Coldest spot in the world is Verhovynsk, where it gets 95 below zero. Imagine trying to pronounce it with your teeth chattering.

Some of those frozen assets undoubtedly froze so easily because they had been well-watered.

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