

Wall Street

Stoppage of Normal Flow of Long-Term Investment Funds May Necessitate Some Adjustments.

By RALPH HENDERSHOT
Times Special Financial Writer

The president of one of the larger Wall Street banks said recently that if any one of the companies of which he is a director decided to float a new securities issue he would promptly resign rather than accept the responsibility thus placed upon him under the new securities act. Other prominent men have adopted a similar attitude.

It should not be inferred that these men are not in sympathy with the aim of the act, which is to protect investors against the sale of questionable securities. It should not be inferred, either, that these men are seeking to sell securities to others they would not be willing to buy themselves. It merely means that the compensation they receive as directors does not justify the risk they would be called upon to take in guaranteeing, in effect, the securities sold.

The problem presented by this situation is a rather important one. No doubt many corporations not interested in short-term credit from the banks could use long-term funds to advantage if they were available. Undoubtedly the use of this money would go a long way toward stimulating trade and helping the NRA over the top.

Fault Not Easily Placed

It might not be fair to say that the stoppage of the normal flow of long-term investment money is due to a fault in the securities act. Likewise it might not be fair to place the blame on the bankers or other prominent people acting as directors of our corporations. Nor can the issue be dismissed by saying that present directors are unwilling to accept responsibility under the act they should make way for others.

In the first place, the act would be of little use if it did not have teeth. But the banker-director could hardly be expected for the usual pay of \$20 a meeting to risk his entire wealth in guaranteeing purchasers of securities against loss for some statement or omission of statement in a prospectus so long as we have ambulance-chasing attorneys.

Is Good Influence on Boards

Moreover, bankers can be good influences on corporate directorates, despite the many apparent mistakes they have made in the past. If the bankers were to be replaced by people who are irresponsible financially, the best interest of the corporations might not be served and the investors might find it difficult to collect for their losses in the event the issue did not turn out right.

Some modification might be advisable all around. It might be possible to temper the securities act to some extent without taking too much away from its effectiveness. It might also be possible to make directors much more responsible for their actions than they have been in the past without chasing the good as well as the bad off the boards entirely. And it might be possible to eliminate the practice of enticing uninterested bankers to boards of directors by offering them commercial accounts to place in their banks or other indirect inducements.

New York Stocks

(By Abbott, Hoppin & Co.)

Sept. 29—Amusement

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