

EDITORIALS

THE OMAHA GUIDE

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Race prejudice must go. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man must prevail. These are the only principles which will stand the acid test of time.

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THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE

In an ably reasoned essay in the April Atlantic Monthly, Sumner H. Slichter discusses "The Great American Experiment." At the end, he sums up his views in these words: "The spirit of enterprise is more than an economic force; it is the very basis for free democratic institutions. Only so long as opportunity is abundant is social conflict mild, and only when social conflict is mild are men willing to settle their differences by voting, by negotiating, or by arbitrating rather than by fighting. The basis for opportunity is expansion. Upon the willingness and ability of democracies to encourage investment will depend their ability to keep opportunity abundant and, therefore, to preserve the free institutions which are the first casualties of severe social conflict."

There is a vastly important, and often overlooked, historical truth here, and its meaning is plain. As Thomas Woodlock says, in commenting on Mr. Slichter's essay, "The plain implication is that thorough economic collectivism must of necessity be totalitarian and that totalitarianism is incompatible with free institutions, no matter whether it be expressed in Nazist, Fascist, Bolshevik, or 'democratic' social structure." In other words, economic collectivism is inescapably an enemy of democratic freedom. It must inevitably result in iron-handed regimentation of individuals, of industries, and of all important resources. And though its advocates may rigidly avoid the word "totalitarianism," that is the goal that must be reached at the end of the collectivist road.

It is a tragic commentary on our confused times that the American people who have expressed the strongest dislike and distrust of the European totalitarian states, have unconsciously permitted the totalitarian gospel under a variety of names, to make ominous advances here. More and more has the government stepped into our economic life. Less and less have been the opportunities for expansion by individuals or businesses. One by one, old liberties have been abrogated.

It cannot be denied that this nation of ours made greater material & social progress in a century and a half than any other nation ever made. That progress was made under true democracy—which means true freedom and the encouragement of the private individual and the private enterprise. Let the people think, before it is too late, of what present policies, many of which go entirely against the whole structure of democracy, may mean to us and to our descendants.

In 1936, the last year in which an authoritative study was made, the cost of government (national, state and local) was \$10 more per person in the United States than was the cost of all types of government in Great Britain.—Sunday Oregonian.

UNHERALDED SERVICE

It's probably only human to do a good deal of kicking at our commercial institutions particularly those which involve "big money." But this kicking shouldn't be allowed to obscure our view of the services they render us.

Banks, for instance probably come in for about as much uniformed abuse as any business.

The banks—which are simply the repositories of money belonging to millions of people, most of them of very moderate means—provided the financial blood that built this country. And they are still providing the financial blood that is further developing this country today.

No banker wants to refuse an application for a loan. He knows that loans make the mare go so far as banking is concerned and that the more sound loans he can make, the faster his community and his bank will grow. Bankers refuse some loans because they have to—because their first thought must always be for the safety of the money entrusted to their care.

In every community in this country the banks are helping today, as in the past, in financing homes, factories and merchants. Banking's service to America isn't often heralded—but it is second to none.

TIME AND FIRE WAITS FOR NO ONE

"I smell smoke," called a teacher in a seminary. Acting quickly, she turned in the fire alarm and luckily just had time to flee with the students and teachers from the building. Then a scene such as she had dreaded was enacted before her horrified eyes. The building burned to the ground.

The fire had a special significance to the teacher because she had become interested in the problem. She had obtained literature from the National Board Fire Underwriters, 85 John St. New York and at first had waged a lone fight in the interest of safety. A little later the students had become interested. Some of them had written essays and the Junior Class had published a school paper on the subject of fire prevention. The teacher herself had written articles. They were hoping to get action.

But—time and fire wait for no one! The school authorities had not corrected dangerous conditions.

Many potential fires such as this one have been averted through the distribution of the National Board's Self-Inspection blank for schools, to be used in periodical inspections. It has been used as a guide and reporting form by the schools and fire departments in hundreds of communities. The National Board also distributes booklets entitled "Fire Prevention and Protection as Applied to Public and Parochial Schools," which describe, simply, concisely and clearly, the fundamentals of fire prevention.

GROUND INTO THE DIRT

Those "big, bad wolves of Wall Street," the chain stores, are amusingly described in a brief article written by the manager of a shoe chain in a southern town.

He says that when his store was opened, there wasn't a single exclusive shoe store in the town. Now there are five. Two of these are independent and he deduces that it is obvious that they are slowly going broke—because one of their owners has just built a fine new home, and the other has bought \$2,000 worth of new furniture. He adds, "Yes, my company is making it tough on the independent shoe dealers."

He believes the chains' personnel

policy is equally reprehensible, recalling that when he was hired, he'd been walking the streets three years in search of a job. He has now been with this company five years—and in that time his salary has been raised more than \$20 a week, he has never lost a baby, joined a fraternal order and is now planning to build a home of his own. As he says, "So you can see that the chains have ground me right into the dirt."

This manager describes other phases of chain store operation in a vein. He points out that it is a well known fact that his company alone belongs to 400 Chambers of Commerce. And, of course, they turn a deaf ear when appeals for organized charities are made—though he's never seen a worthy case yet when his store didn't come through with a sizable check. "Yeah, a cold blooded outfit if there ever was one," he concludes.

TAX PETS

Public alarm over tax freedom of government-owned light and power plants is growing rapidly, especially in those states which have been "widely "blessed" through socialization of the heavily taxed private companies. And the logical upshot of this is a demand that the publicly-owned plants be taxed on precisely the same basis as the private plants.

In states such as Tennessee, where the TVA has taken over practically all of the private electric industry, all units of government are faced with an extremely grave fiscal problem. Tax revenue far into the millions has been lost, and at the present time the taxes paid by the TVA are insignificant. Either the public plants must be taxed—or the tax burden borne by all other citizens and businesses within the state must be substantially increased to make up for the deficit.

A similar condition is developing on the West Coast, where power from Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams threatens to supplant private power. In Oregon and Washington, the power utilities are among the largest taxpayers. Loss of this tax revenue provoke the most serious sort of fiscal crisis.

Furthermore, there can be no such thing as a fair and square government ownership "yardstick" with which to measure the rates charged by the private industry so long as the socialized plants are government tax pets.

If the municipal and government ownership advocates are sincere, they should be among the first to advocate that public plants be treated exactly as private plants in all matters, including taxation, regulation, bookkeeping methods, etc. That's the only way an honest comparison of rates and service can be had. And the fact that most backers of power socialism are fighting to the last ditch to prevent their pet projects from being taxed as heavily as the private industry certainly can't be expected to breed public confidence in their grandiose schemes.

WHERE IS POSTERITY?

Writing in the Saturday Evening Post, Harry Scherman, the distinguished economist and author of "The Promises Men Live By," says, "There is only one alarming aspect of our national debt, in my opinion—the apathy and ignorance of the American public with regard to it. The common attitude is: If the experts differ as widely as they seem to do, why should an ordinary citizen add the national debt to his other workaday worries; sufficient unto the day are our own debts; if some great national disaster is really involved, poor posterity, not ourselves, will suffer for it.

"But ten or twelve years from

now is hardly posterity. Quite a few economists are of the mind that this short period may easily witness an economic torando arising from the debt if its uninterrupted rise is not permanently reversed."

This public callousness toward a fiscal policy that, long enough continued, can result in nothing else than national bankruptcy is one of the most tragic things in our life as a people today. Nine short years ago the debt had just passed the \$16,000,000,000 point, and millions of thinking people were worrying. Today the debt has reached \$41,000,000,000—and most of us seem to take it for granted, as if it were as uncontrollable and as little important as a change in weather.

The title of Mr. Scherman's though provoking Post article is, "Is Posterity Just Around the Corner?" And there can be no logical answer to that question, except Yes, if the debt should rise as much, proportionately, in the next nine years as it did in the last nine, it would pass \$100,000,000,000! And no one, not even the most fanatical of the "spend, spend and spend" advocates, has yet contended that we could carry so great a load as that without living in a state of permanent depression, with a tremendous percentage of the population permanently on relief, and the standard of living of the rest of us constantly dropping.

The debt is controlled—or not controlled—but the men we elect to office, the Congressmen and the state legislators and county and municipal officials. And these men are controlled—or not controlled—by the people. The debt problem comes squarely back to us—the voters of America who must decide whether we shall return to fiscal sanity, or go whole hog toward ruin.

GET ON YOUR HORSE

There has been a praiseworthy increase of interest in spring and summer community clean-up campaigns, which are designed to beautify our towns and cities, raise the values of both business and residential property, and reduce the hazards of that dread destroyer, fire.

An announcement from the National Board of Fire Underwriters says that fire chiefs from many sections of the country have announced plans for radio broadcasts this season, and are also widely using the self inspection blanks, issued free by the National Board, which makes it possible for anyone to go through his home or place of business, locate fire hazards, and easily eliminate them.

Communities which have not yet planned activities of this nature should as the saying goes, "get on their horse." And where towns are too small to have fire departments, local officials, civic organizations and individuals can get together and take the lead. A clean up campaign doesn't involve any great expense or expenditure of time. It does involve making repairs to houses and building, painting structures where needed, stop fire traps if any exist, keeping grass and weeds cut short on empty lots and fields, etc. In many a case, an intensive week or so of work of this sort, once real public interest is aroused, will eliminate literally thousands of fire hazards, large and small, and go a long way toward making a major disaster in the town impossible.

Further, these campaigns are a fine stimulant for local businesses which sell paint, lumber and other materials used. They arouse pride in the community and cause many a lasting resolution by citizens, to always keep their property in good order and appearance. The spring clean-up, in brief, helps to make the towns of America beautiful—and safe.