

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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ELECTRICITY AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

You're heard an endless amount of political criticism of the electric utilities. What the politicians don't tell you are the many things the utilities do in the public interest.

Some time ago, the War Department started work on an important, far reaching plan of enlisting the aid of key industries in preparing for national defense. Immediate contact was naturally made the electric utilities. And here's what the public official concerned, Acting Secretary of War Johnson, has to say about their response:

"We asked the utilities to supply us with information in regard to their present capacity. We called upon them to estimate their future load growth. We requested their plans for capacity installations. Every utility we addressed sent a committee from its executive and engineering staffs to Washington, at its own expense, to analyze the nature and the breakdown of the information desired. Within 30 days, the power industry met the desires of the War Department and the Federal Power Commission. We simply had told industry what we wanted; and, characteristically, industry responded.

"Last September, I called a conference of utility executives in munitions centers and discussed with them the power situation. I pointed out to them shortages in capacity and asked them to start at once on the construction of at least a million kilowatts of additional capacity. Their answer was prompt and wholehearted. Today, a capacity of approximately 900,000 kilowatts is ready for immediate installation or on order and there is every indication that we very soon will reach our million mark.

"As part of our power project, we asked the utilities and the manufacturers of turbo-electric equipment to standardize engineering machinery of each capacity. Again, industry fully cooperated.

"Our power program required that we confer with experts on rates and that we have access to company records. The National Defense Power Committee sent out field parties. Wherever they went, they were cordially received. They were given free access to the necessary records. They were provided with stenographic and clerical help. They were offered engineering advice. The narrow bottleneck in power supply is slowly cracking and it is due to the wholehearted cooperation of the industry that we have made such excellent progress."

CALL A HALT

It is encouraging to report that simple factual and authoritative matter concerning the immensely important subject of fire prevention and control, is reaching a constantly widening audience.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters, for instance, has issued seventy-two bulletins covering various phases of the problem during the

past years. They concern such topics as building construction, air-conditioning equipment, electricity and electric wiring, the handling of inflammable liquids and gases, fire department inspections, etc. Now these bulletins have been bound and distribution is made without charge to the entire membership of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and to many other officers of fire departments. To others the volume is sold at a nominal price. And a certain number of schools are given copies for distribution.

The bulletin covers fire in all its phases—and the fire marshal or department member who reads them, receives a thorough lesson in the technique of fire prevention. The material pertaining to building construction alone, for example can very easily be of inestimable value to any community—a sound building code has prevented many a disastrous fire.

Information designed for the general lay public is likewise widely issued by the National Board, by insurance companies, and by other organizations. Plain and easy means of ridding property of the most ordinary fire hazards are described. The property owner who uses this information, can usually through the expenditure of a small amount of time, make his home and place of business far safer from fire than it is today.

This steady, tireless work in the interest of fire prevention is one of the finest public spirited undertakings in the country today. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property is going up in smoke each year—most of it unnecessarily. It's time to call a halt.

16,000,000 AMERICANS SPEAK

"Hands off legitimate competition," so far as destructive or discriminatory legislation is concerned. That, in effect has been said by nearly 16,000,000 Americans, in all walks of life, through associations and groups representing them.

The organizations which have gone strongly on record in favor of honest competition in merchandising, and in opposition to any and all kinds of class legislation aimed at legitimate business of any nature, are scattered throughout the country. And they include representative associations of farmers, newspapers, property-owners, union labor, consumers, etc.

For example, last January, the Pennsylvania Potato Growers Association assailed the Patman bill to put the chains out of business as "contrary to the best interest of farmers, wage-earners and consumer." The same month the Maryland Farm Bureau went on record condemning the Patman bill and opposing "all such unnecessary taxes and restrictions, both state and national." The Georgia Federation of Labor states that "destruction of multi-unit retail distribution would destroy at least 20,000 job opportunities in the state of Georgia now increasingly open to organized labor." Killing the chains, thinks the Kentucky Press Association would hit community business, employment, tax revenue and agriculture. The Chicago Real Estate Board holds that elimination of the national chains would "destroy real estate values; bring economic chaos to all American trade, commerce and industry; increase unemployment, and substantially result in the disorganization of thriving retail areas." The Massachusetts Committee on Consumer Legislation condemned anti-chain bills as "discriminatory legislation that interferes with the rights of consumers to exercise their purchasing power to the best advantage."

A recent survey shows that some 334 resolutions of this character have been passed—all by responsible organizations which are in no way dominated by chain interests. There is every evidence that this is what the great bulk of American citizens—as distinct from a small intensely noisy group of politicians—thinks about restrictive legislation and punitive tax policies which would inevitably lower the standard of living of millions of families, destroy opportunity for the worker, and reduce the markers of agriculture.

"IT COSTS TOO MUCH"

Hardly a day goes by without our seeing something we want to purchase—but don't, because "it costs too much."

It may be a suit of clothes or a household convenience. It may be something special for dinner. Whatever it is, the belief that "it costs too much" blocks the purchase. And we customarily blame the merchant.

The merchant may be at fault in some cases, but not in the majority. He sells as cheaply as he possibly can knowing better than you do that high prices do more than anything else to build up sales resistance. Believe it or not, legislation, in many instances, is more directly responsible for high price than the people who make, handle and sell commodities.

A large number of states, for example have passed so-called fair trade laws. These laws vary in detail, but all are about the same in principle. They effectively block honest competition by preventing merchants from selling certain articles below a specified minimum. As a result they place a premium on waste and inefficiency. The high cost dealer is allowed to be the arbiter of price and value. And the low cost stores isn't allowed to cut the price even though it wants to and could do so and still make a satisfactory profit.

Various local surveys concerning the economic effects of these laws have been made. And in every instance, the surveys have shown that they raise the cost of living, and reduce sales. The average family spends about all it receives in income—and when prices are forced up it must buy fewer or inferior articles.

So don't blame the merchant when you think prices are too high. Most of the time he, like the consumer, is a victim of price boosting policies which are beyond his control.

CONFLAGRATIONS STILL HAPPEN

"The day of conflagrations is not past," says F. D. Layton, President of the National Board of Fire Underwriters. And he has plenty of evidence to support his statement.

Last May a Chicago granary fire and explosion devastated an area one-fourth mile square, took eight lives and destroyed property valued at more than \$3,000,000. Earlier in the year, fire razed a business block in Sandusky, Ohio, causing a million-dollar loss. Several buildings went up in Halifax, Nova Scotia—to the tune of \$800,000.

As Mr. Layton also says "The threat of great fires is present in most cities." Inadequate or outmoded building codes—the existence of ancient firetraps and tenements—poorly organized fire fighting facilities—unstable water supply—these are a few of the hazards that may, at any moment, produce a hell of smoke and flame which will leave death and destruction in its wake.

Further, the conflagration danger is not confined to the larger cities of the country. A quarter mile fire as that which occurred in Chicago is

soon forgotten in a metropolis—a fire of similar size in a small town would destroy it completely. In many of the small communities a single factory is the main source of the town's jobs and income. If that factory burns, a blow is struck from which the community may never be able to recover.

Here is where the cause of fire prevention comes straight home to us all. To help prevent fire is a personal job.

BUSINESS IN FARMING

The agricultural marketing movement has been given the widespread support of business leaders for two excellent reasons.

First, marketing cooperation simply means applying proven business principles to meeting agriculture's sales problems. And business know that progress requires all persons involved in a given calling to work together.

Second, business is vitally interested in the welfare of agriculture. The farm population constitutes the greatest single market for the products of our factories. As a result, prosperous farming has a great bearing on prosperous industry.

Cooperation in farm production and marketing is going ahead, and rapidly, with industry's best wishes for success behind it. And the whole country feels the benefits.

UNPRECEDENTED TREASURE

The Masterpieces of Art Exhibition at the New York World's Fair represents the greatest collection of old masters the world has ever seen. Probably never again will such a concentration of artistic treasures be possible. Ranging from Rembrandt, Titian, Van Dyck, and Watteau through the whole catalogue of great masters, this exhibition records the development of the painter's art through its greatest days.

Under the supervision of the directors of the Detroit Institute of Arts, a non-profit corporation called the Art Associates, Inc., was formed to build the special structure necessary to house these priceless paintings and private contributions were secured to underwrite the heavy expense of shipping, insuring and guarding these works from damage by fire or theft. The collection has an estimated worth of \$30,000,000.

INTERESTS IN COMMON

The farmer and the urban businessman are often represented as having drastically conflicting interests. The truth of the matter is that their basic interests are identical.

As Secretary Wallace recently said, "Underlying the agricultural situation and seriously limiting the progress of agriculture toward a higher standard of living, is the low level of industrial activity and the large volume of city unemployment." And, looking at the other side of the medal, is the fact that bad conditions among farmers means limited profitless markets for manufacturers.

The wise farmer knows that prosperity among businessmen is essential to wide and growing consumption of manufactured products. It is for this reason that representative business is bodily behind sound farm-betterment activities, such as the growing marketing cooperative movement.

"If government spending is leading us to ruin, it is because of what Washington is doing for the neighborhoods. Each neighborhood now says:

"Every other neighborhood is getting its. We must get ours."