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U. S. R. S. COMMISSARY RECORDS DISCLOSE STARTLING TRUTHS

(By Benjamin Franklin Fly)

You land owners, entrymen unit holders and water users, as well as those other good citizens who reside in Yuma, who may doubt the correctness of the statements made in these articles—just stop a moment and think! Go to the records and examine them; go to your neighbor who has seen this and that done, or who knows of this or that being left undone; go to men who have been employed on the Yuma project or to men now employed; go to time-keepers and former time-keepers and make careful inquiry into the "system," to which there is such strong objection, and every one of you will be fully convinced that **"the half has not been told!"**

You will also find that the "equal and exact justice to all" is not the policy that has heretofore been practiced on the Yuma project!

Take, for example, the method of keeping men at work. Here you will find that the man who earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, with pick and shovel, and working under the direct rays of a blistering sun makes the munificent sum of "two bones" per day, out of which he pays 75 cents for his meals, consisting of ordinary, plain, substantial food—minus side dishes or relishes, and minus butter, and eats from a common mess-table. On the other hand, the "educational and non-educational" employes at Reclamation headquarters, in the local service, receiving all the way from -100 to \$300 per month, have their dining table spread with fine linen and fairly groaning under the weigh of the good things set before them—a

"feast for the gods," if you please—and all of this for two-bits, twenty-five cents, or a quarter of a dollar, the same that is charged the "common laborer." Is that "equal and exact justice to all"?

But, let's follow this a little further and see what happens! The men in the camps **never get supplies at cost, but they pay sufficient over and above cost to make the gross amount of business done net a profit of 25 per cent.** After seeing the "bountiful spread" on the "educational and non-educational" table and witnessing the scanty number of dishes on the "common labor" mess table, each paying the same price it must necessarily follow that "common labor" is actually feeding those who hold the easy jobs!

The same is true, according to very trustworthy and reliable sources, with regard to the purchase of supplies—the favored ones get whatever they want at cost, sometimes possibly at a good deal less, whereas, "common labor" pays enough above cost to make the entire amount sold bring in a 25 per cent profit, again showing that the "common labor" actually pays for everything purchased by the seventy-odd "educational and non-educational" employes at local reclamation headquarters.

Follow up this line of thought a step further and you will see that during July and August the custom has been to "lay off" several hundred men who unfortunately for them, came under the head of "common labor"—the poor devils who only get "two bones" per day. When all this large force is "laid off" their pay ceases instantly, but not so with the army of employes at headquarters!

Instead of being "laid off," they are given a "vacation on full pay"! Is that "equal rights to all, exclusive privileges to none"?

It may be interesting right here to quote a few lines from the hearings before the Congressional subcommittee of appropriations, the same gentlemen who visited Yuma not very long ago. The question then being inquired into was the reclamation stores. Heres the record, read it:

"The Chairman (Fitzgerald of New York)—While on this question of profit, let me ask you, is there any complaint from the employes about the price they have to pay."

"Mr. Davis (Director U. S. R. S.)—I have never known of any complaint."

"The Chairman—The prices are so fixed that they are satisfactory to those who patronize the stores."

Mr. Davis—That is my observation and belief. I do not know of any case where they have complaint."

"The Chairman—I ask that because frequently in labor circles one of the very grievous complaints of the employes is that the company operating the stores practically gets all the compensation of the employes in the form of profits for the stores, and that there is nothing for the employe. I wanted your statement in the record as to whether you have had complaints of that character—that the compensation of the employes is eaten up by patronizing the stores."

"Mr. Newell (consulting engineer)—I might say that the policy has been to make a profit of about 10 or 12 per cent on the sales, and at the same time to cover all overhead charges, and especially to give a good class of material—that is to say a little better class of boots, shoes and clothing at the same price than could be obtained from mail-order houses—the prime object being to keep the men on the work and at the same time to be sure that the stores are not running behind, but are actually earning enough to offset the loss on any hospitals or on account of any disaster that might occur."

That perfectly illustrates the working of the "system" and that's what I'm kicking about—not the employes but the "system."

Mr. Davis had heard no complaints and truthfully said so; but it must be borne in mind that his business of "Director of the Reclamation Service" does not throw him in personal contact with the "common labor" the fellows who pay enough for what they buy to net a profit of 25 per cent, and quite naturally he hears no "kicks" from them; and also quite naturally he hears no word of complaint from the "educational and noneducational" class who get everything they want at cost just as we all do who have the chance; but his ears must be set on fire at times when common labor begins talking about paying two bits for a ten cent nose rag, or 7.50 for a pair of \$5 shoes, and these latter having been purchased from a store bearing the name of a partnership firm that had been dissolved years and years before, showing that the shoes need not have been sold to any one in order to make them walk; for they are not only old enough to do that unassisted, but they were probably old enough to have voted for Grover Cleveland!

When Mr. Newell testified, it had not been put in the record that the profit was 25 per cent, and he probably

was not aware that any one in the service purchased supplies at cost, or less than cost, therefore the estimate of "10 or 12 per cent on the sales." However this or that may be, the "system" is worse than rotten, it even smells unto Heaven itself and if it can not be conducted "on the dead square" giving every one an equal and exact chance to furnish all these supplies then in the name of common decency, in the interest of every merchant on the Yuma project, for Heaven's sake abolish the whole "system!" The poor are entitled to some little degree of consideration to say the least; the 60 dollars per day workman who sits on his back in carrying sacks of cement to be dumped in the river (under orders) is entitled to as much consideration, when it comes to purchasing boots and shoes so old that "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," as is the high-falutin' engineer who tries to make the water run up hill! Because the poor devil doesn't register a "kick" at the prices charged him is simply because he is no fool—he would be instantly discharged if he did kick. And also discharged just as quickly if he pointed out any error of judgment by those above him—as has very often been the case on the Yuma project. Mr. Lawson, Mr. Teasdale and Mr. Fleming will probably set all these things right "for such, are they doctors."

PAINFULLY HURT BY PREMATURE EXPLOSION

Jack Levake, Ed. Buker and Pablo Munoz were injured by a premature explosion at Potholes last evening. In digging an unexploded charge. Dr. Ap-John went out and dressed the wounds.

Mr. Levake, who has charge of the reclamation work at the dam was hit on the knee by a flying rock. Mr. Buker sustained painful injuries about the head and eyes, which may necessitate his coming to the Yuma hospital for treatment.

PRESCOTT WANTS TO REGULATE SALOONS

"The theory of absolute prohibition has much to commend it. The working of absolute prohibition is a horse of another color. We still believe that the proper regulation is the better method."—Prescott Courier.

But who wants the saloon regulated in Arizona now? Certainly none but the liquor interests, who hope to open up saloons again.