

THE PEOPLE'S VOICE

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Is It a "Soap Box" Debate?

The British, even more than we here in America, have permitted "soap boxers" to "pop off" in the parks and on street corners, looking upon this as a safety measure; that the hard, common sense of the public would evaluate the expressions of these soap box orations and catalogue them as those of malcontents and not worthy of much consideration. And in the main the public has been right. The soap boxers too, may be given credit for having planted some new thoughts in their criticisms of the social and political conditions; thoughts which have been transmuted into remedial action in some cases.

Perhaps I am guilty of some form of sacrilege in doing so, but I am disposed to look upon the present debate between the USSR and the U. S. in the United Nations Assembly, as a sort of glorified soap box contest in oratorical recrimination. It must be admitted undoubtedly, that it has portentous implications and potentialities, with authorized representatives of the two most powerful nations of the world as participants, and, in effect jeopardizing any progress in the development of the United Nations as an agency of permanent peace. To many thinking people, the attitude of the United States seems to call for making it impossible for the USSR and its friendly nations to maintain membership in the United Nations except as "silent partners". This is countered by the representatives of the USSR by an obvious attempt to line up the nations of the world against the United States as an imperialistic, war mongering nation, not to be trusted.

There can be no question but that the USSR has overworked the power of the veto. Originally, when planned, at Yalta and at San Francisco, there appeared to be a possibility of unanimity of thought and action by the major powers. Since then, however, too many leaders in America with their control of channels of information and looking with distaste and fear upon the functioning of the socialized economy of the USSR and dreading its influence on the remainder of Europe, have succeeded in some degree in a campaign of hatred and belligerence toward the USSR. This development in turn, has made the USSR almost hysterically suspicious of every move of the United States, and the two nations today can see nothing good in each other; are merely looking with suspicion on all proposals coming from either.

Unquestionably there is a dangerous trend in the present debate in the United Nations assembly between the USSR and the United States. However, if it is not too fatuously optimistic I would venture the suggestion that like the soap boxers on the street corners sometimes damning the government for sins of commission or omission, the debate may serve to bring into the open some things that need to be exposed; some things said that need saying and letting the people of the nations decide who is right and who is wrong and to what degree.

Perhaps the American people might do well to insist that our representatives definitely start in their negotiations with all foreign nations with an absolute renouncement of war and then proceed from that point with actions which demonstrate unconditioned determination to build a peaceful world. A great step forward to that end would be to agree immediately to outlawing the atomic bomb as a weapon and then proceeding with the plan for world control of the development of atomic energy. The fact that we are still busily making bombs, said to be many times as powerfully destructive as the one we used to destroy Hiroshima, makes our talks of peace in the world, open to question. And the fact that we insist on continuing the making of these destructive weapons until such time as world controls are established, places us in the position, justly or unjustly in the eyes of the world, as holding a club over all nations to compel them to meet our terms for peace. An agreement by the United States to the immediate destruction of our stockpile of atomic bombs would undoubtedly be the greatest investment for peace that could now be made.

And if the majority of the American people want to avoid war and destruction of lives, they might well try to impress our government with the urgency of the need for this.

What's Happened?

Our Sainly Sam must not have received much encouragement from the members of the state legislature on his suggestion to call a special session to correct one of the errors he made by approving bills during the regular session which made it possible for the racketeers in the state to organize so-called social clubs here, there and everywhere throughout the state. Evidently members felt that some \$150,000 was too big a jolt for the taxpayers to take to soothe the qualms of conscience being suffered by Sainly Sam.

Incidentally, Sainly Sam's conscience must be a tricky thing. If my memory is not entirely at fault, some of the most liberal contributors to the expenses of Sainly Sam's last campaign for the governorship were the proprietors of the establishments in Helena which the attorney general has commenced action on charges that gambling is being carried on in them. Apparently the possible taint of the money contributed was overlooked. Of course it is possible that Sainly Sam is so unworlly (Continued on Page 3)

REFLECTIONS

It has been interesting, enlightening and somewhat exciting to journey around Montana with Senator Murray's MVA hearing party as I have been privileged to do for the past week. MVA and all the conceptions for human betterment that lie behind and are involved in it is a tremendous thing. It is much larger and more challenging in its fruitful offering than many people yet realize; the largest and most far-reaching peace-time job that congress has ever been called on to authorize.

All we humans are naturally conservative. We have somewhat of a sense of fear of the things we do not understand. When a new proposal is made the natural train of thought of each of us is "How will this affect me; what will it do for or to the community in which I live; what changes will it make in the way of life to which I am accustomed?"

With enlightenment and understanding of a new and meritorious project comes first, interest, then enthusiasm, and finally that typical American daring "It's a good bet, let's put it through". This process is now actively effective all over Montana.

It is clearly apparent that in the mass thinking MVA naturally divides itself into four fields. Each individual more clearly sees that side of the project

or field with which his own past has been most closely identified; the one in which his own line of activities, are best reflected.

The economic side, i.e. the opportunity side, the chance for advancement side, or the money-making side has the first call. It is the field first canvassed by a large percentage, probably a majority of individuals. What does this thing mean in terms of wealth creation, industrialization, business-openings jobs, debts and taxation? Answers to these are the important matters in the economic or business field.

The human welfare or social aspects of the project is the field that has primary call in the minds of the majority of the intelligencia. These who are largely professional workers, educators, publicists, humanitarians and advanced guard leaders in all measures for the upward progress of civilization think first of the MVA in terms of higher living standards, better opportunities for our sons and daughters, more education, expansion of wholesome recreational facilities, and what is commonly termed "the more abundant life".

Well, I can't qualify very highly in either of these groups and not at all in the fourth one to be mentioned. (Continued on Page Three)

SALES TAX IN THE WIND?

By "BILL"

There's some things in the wind regarding Montana education which, on closer inspection bode no good for either our educational system or for Montana taxpayers.

In few words, certain forces in this state, intent on shoving through the discredited school reorganization bill (HB 124) and with foisting a sales tax upon the taxpayers to pay the freight, plan to capitalize upon present deplorable conditions surrounding our schools.

To that end, the campaign plans have apparently already been drawn, and willing stooges are quietly going about inciting a "grass roots" movement for a special session of the legislature.

They reason—as well they might—that their chances of ramming the "dictator" bill down the throats of Montana people can be more easily accomplished with the current mis-representatives comprising the 30th legislature, than with the next assembly which will undoubtedly find many of their strongest backers tossed into the political ashcan.

Likewise, the chances of imposing a sales tax yoke on an already overtaxed body politic are much better should they be able to pressure the governor into calling a special session between now and March 1 next year. To that end you will see an increasing propaganda emphasis on the inadvisability of further taxation on real property—that OTHER means must be found. To the special plunder gang which controlled the regular session in typical "Punch 'n Judy" fashion, that "other" means a SALES TAX and SALES TAX ALONE.

This is no time for dilly-dallying; no time to be asleep. Rest assured that the "other side" is certainly wide awake and is even now laying the groundwork for a campaign predicated on hysteria for unloading a sales tax on everything the hard-pressed consumer must buy.

The demand today is for much needed improvement of our educational standards, of decent salaries for teachers, for better school plant equipment. And, this demand lies not alone with the teaching profession—it is rapidly growing with all Montanans interested in the welfare of our future citizens.

Money to meet these demands will have to be forthcoming from the state, and unless the forces of special privilege can sneak through a sales tax, they will be faced with having to more nearly pay a fair proportion of the costs of maintaining our educational system. Let's not be caught off guard!

New It's Co-ops' Turn . . .

You'll recall not so many months back when spacious ads in the daily press proclaimed that "labor is a monopoly", that labor must be curbed, the right to work must prevail etc., etc., you will recall further that all of this was part of the conditioning process of our economic masters in building up public hostility to organized labor that the Taft-Hartley blueprint for

fascism might be overwhelmingly passed by a subservient congress.

Now that labor has been "taken care of", these same worshippers of the Golden Calf are levelling their guns at another terrible "monopoly" that bids fair to entwine its economic tentacles around our entire American way of life and crush our most holy of holies, "free enterprise. This time it is the fast-growing co-operative movement.

If it be possible to build up a similar hostility to Co-ops as was so done with labor, then equally repressive legislation will be pressed to lay the groundwork for complete destruction of the Co-op movement. The propaganda offensive has been underway for sometime, first spearheaded by the National Tax Equality Association, and now by the Ploeser house subcommittee which is holding "rigged" hearings in many parts of the nation.

Should the "findings" of this committee, ably aided and abetted by the corporation press, have a favorable reaction with the American public, then co-operators the nation over may look forward to treatment at the hands of the 80th congress, not dissimilar to the treatment accorded American trade unionists.

Whether its labor "monopolies" or Co-op "monopolies", which "threaten" our sacred private enterprise is immaterial. Such noble American institutions as Standard Oil, the duPonts, General Motors and the corner Safeway store must, at all costs be protected, and the present crop of misfits in the congress are just the guys to do the protecting. It behooves Co-op members everywhere to be vigilant.

Birds of a Feather???

Announcement by Frank Gannett that he favors Tom Dewey for the presidency should cause the New York governor as many uneasy moments as did Gerald L. K. Smith's endorsement cause Zales N. Ecton last year. In case you didn't know—publisher Gannett founded and is the evil genius behind the Committee for Constitutional Government—an outfit which has been repeatedly labelled "America's No. 1 Fascist Outfit", in the halls of congress.

"The Great Administrator" . . .

"While everyone credits him (Herby Hoover) for splendid work in Belgium it is a historical fact that Belgian relief was in successful operation six weeks before Hoover was asked to head it and that Hoover hired a press agent (Edgar Rickard) who flooded the nation with propaganda glorifying 'Hoover of Belgium'." —George Seides' In Fact, July 10, 1944.

That We Can . . .

"If we can afford electricity to light our streets, we can afford also to light up the alleys of ignorance . . ."—Eddie Cantor over NBC, in eloquent plea for the people of America to do something about the dire straits our educational systems are in.

Montana Schools—

(Continued from Page One)

school; these children this year have no time for games and wholesome recreation, but are condemned instead to bumping along in a bus. And the cream of their children's strength is exhausted each morning before they arrive at school, and opportunity for education thereby lessened. Transportation certainly is not education, and its cost is very high.

Remember, reader, that there are hundreds of such communities in Oklahoma, crying out against the oppressive hand of arbitrary power. A state school board, remote from the people and if not indifferent at least uninformed, wields totalitarian power in Oklahoma.

As in Oklahoma, so in Montana if the school bill had become law its dictatorial power would have provoked great discontent. The bill gave a nine-member board in Helena centralized control with absolute power to reject any or all plans submitted

by any county redistricting committee and to set up instead a plan of its own, designating each consolidation center or centers and controlled areas. Absolute power was given to the boards of super-districts at their own option to close "any school" and to cut off the parents of displaced children with "supervised home study". The bill provided that no rural or small town school could operate without favorable action by the board of its super-district. But if such a school desired isolation status, and had less than thirteen pupils enrolled, it must not only have the approval of its super-district board but also must go to Helena and beg for permission to open.

The writing of this totalitarian school bill was sponsored in Montana by the National Association of Manufacturers and by the Taxpayers Association. Each had a hand in drafting the recommendations on which the bill was based, and the N.A.M. is said to have made a large financial contribution to this end. They united their forces to have the

bill passed "just as it is", that is, without amendment.

Montana's School Situation is Better Than Oklahoma's

Montana's communities almost without exception have made a large increase this year in the salaries paid to school teachers. They have done this instead of squandering school funds in paying for long school-bus hauls over unfit roads, and the approach they have made to decent salaries is attracting teachers from Oklahoma and other states. The overcrowding of classes is not so extreme as it would have been if forced consolidation had been imposed. As soon as an adequate number of school rooms have been built, there will be release from the frightful overcrowding that retards education in so many of Montana's larger towns and cities. Oklahoma will not have funds for such building, if it continues to waste school money on long bus hauls like the two-hour trip from Waterloo to Edmond. Higher salaries for teachers, and more school rooms, are preferred in Montana.