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The Little Man and the Codes

WE note that the tobacco code has at last been adopted. We don't know what difference it is going to make in the price of cigarettes, if any. For that matter, we are not quite clear just what difference the codes in general have made or are likely to make.

There are certain things in which it is reasonably easy to determine what "fair practice" consists of. It certainly is not fair practice to make a profit by paying wages below what the same workers could earn somewhere else, or by compelling them to work longer hours than do other businesses in the same line. But we have never been able to see it as unfair practice for the man who has special advantages of location, facilities or access to raw materials, to profit by those advantages.

The small business man who lives in the rear of or over his shop, for example, and perhaps owns the property, ought not to be compelled to charge for his product as much as the big industry in the same line that has a heavy overhead burden of interest, taxes and rent. The most that the little fellow can do will make no appreciable dent in the big fellow's earnings, but if the big fellow can fix it so that the little fellow will have to charge out of all proportion to his expenses, then it won't be long before the little man is put out of business. We hear complaints about the hardships they work on small business men in many lines.

In coal mining, oil production, steel making, perhaps a number of other industries in which there is no material difference in the product, it may be all right to fix prices by means of a code. It would take a standing army ten times as big as the largest force America ever turned loose on the liquor bootleggers, to police the entire business and industrial system of the nation.

A Brave Woman Rewarded

WE take off our hat to Mrs. Irene Davis of Greenville, Alabama. We pass our especial compliments to the citizens of her community who were so understanding as to recognize in her an example of the fundamental American qualities.

They gave her a silver cup, a couple of weeks ago, on which was engraved the sentiment that Irene Davis is one of Alabama's greatest women. She didn't lead any campaign to abolish anything, or run for public office, or win a prize in a beauty contest, or any of the other things that so many women do to bring themselves notoriety, if not approval.

Nobody ever heard of Irene Davis, outside of her own neighbors, a year ago. Only the relief workers knew that she was a widow with three children and a lot of debts. She didn't ask for any "relief" except a chance to dig her own subsistence and that of her children out of the ground. So she was fixed up with an eight-acre piece of land, with a tumble-down house on it, and went to it. Relief Administration provided seed, feed, fertilizer, groceries and clothing on the chance that she could pay for them out of what she got off the little farm. She borrowed a mule from a neighbor to do her plowing. Rather, she rented the mule by the day, for every day the mule worked she or her 14-year-old boy worked for the mule's owner.

In the story-books, that sort of determination always wins. There are a lot of folks these days who have the idea that patience, industry, thrift and the old-fashioned virtues don't pay any more. They do pay, and they paid in Mrs. Davis' case. Besides a living for herself and family, she got enough out of the soil the first season to pay off the advances made by the relief administration and leave something over. And when the story of her achievement got around, the citizens of Greenville and other parts of the State got together and gave her that silver cup.

To us there is the strongest kind of an inspiration in Mrs. Davis' feat. So long as that spirit of independence, of willingness to face hardship and toil rather than to be a burden upon the community continues to exist, even in a small degree, among American women, we have no fear for the nation which their sons and daughters will inherit.

THROUGH CAPITAL KEYHOLES

BY BESS HINTON SILVER

AUTO TAGS—

It's now recognized as a foregone conclusion that automobile license tags are going to be cheaper when you decorate the mahogany of the State Revenue Department next January. The Joint roads committee of House and Senate have already agreed upon reducing the rate per hundredweight from 55 cents to 40 cents with a minimum tag costing \$9 instead of \$12.50. By the time you read this the bill may have become law by passage through the General Assembly.

LOW DOWN—

News is seeping down from Washington that the AAA is not so hot for legislation controlling the production of potatoes. Tar Heels and other representatives of potato-producing States put the bee on the AAA boys but it now appears that Secretary Wallace's crowd put one over on the potato men. They drafted a bill that bids fair to classify many potato farmers as criminals if they violate technical provisions of the act. Congressman Lindsay Warren has promised to look after North Carolina potato men with the proper amendments before the bill becomes law.

MODERN STEP—

With old-age pensions and unemployment insurance as well as other social - security legislation coming along to relieve old-fashion-

ed county homes of much of their burden, State Senator Julian Allsbrook, of Halifax, thinks it might be a good plan to turn over the county home buildings to the care of neglected children. Many counties in North Carolina have modern buildings constructed as "poor houses" that will be vacant if the aged and unemployed are supported by government money. Senator Allsbrook is considering introducing proper legislation to carry out his idea.

NOT SO FAST—

People who would divert highway taxes to the support of various and sundry causes are not getting along so well with the present General Assembly. Probably that is because many members live on secondary roads that have created a financial surplus by a maintenance deficit. At any rate the Legislature lost no time appropriating \$3,000,000 for immediate repair and improvement of roads of the State.

NEEDED—

The federal government is getting ready to spend about four billion dollars in relief work in cooperation with the 48 states. But the states must set up machinery to conform with federal regulations before sharing in the benefits. So far North Carolina has done nothing to get in line for its share in this gigantic program. It's time the boys in the Legislature were up and doing.

TUBERCULOSIS—

There has been some doubt about whether the State should enlarge the present tubercular hospital in the Sand Hills or construct a new unit in the mountain section of the State. During debate on the matter it was brought out that no private tubercular sanatorium in the

world is as large as the present State unit. It was also established that some patients recover in one climate and lose ground in another. As a result it now appears that if anything is done it probably will be authorization for construction of a new hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis.

A SNAG—

The McDonald-Lumpkin anti-sales tax bloc was getting along swimmingly until the question of taxing individuals making over \$1,000 annually was reached. That class being rather large and already paying numerous taxes, considerable noise was raised. The final outcome is still uncertain. If you earn more than \$1,000 gross income per year and do not pay schedule B license taxes it might be well to look into the matter.

DICTATORS—

Representatives Tam C. Bowie, of Ashe, and United States Page, of Bladen, have been called "dictators" since the introduction of several measures that other legislators say would put them in absolute political control in their respective counties. Mr. Bowie has been more successful than Mr. Page in getting his bills enacted into law but both have experienced difficulties in steering their propositions through the Legislature.

LOBBYISTS—

Raleigh was a bit shy on lobbyists before the introduction of the McDonald-Lumpkin plan as a substitute for the sales tax. But the number of gentle persuaders picked up immediately thereafter. And the boys are settling down with their own opinion that tax matters will not be settled until the gavels fall on sine die adjournment of the 1935 Legislature.

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