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WHY WE'RE YELLING

We were discussing this and that with a friend the other night, and he accused us of being inconsistent and eynically selfish.

"You're always raising cain about big government, big taxes and the like," he said, "yet you're always yelling for more federal and state money, and calling on town and county governments to put up money for this and that."

We agreed there might be a degree of cynicism and selfishness involved, but denied the charge of inconsistency.

In the first place, we said, you have to define consistency. If a man said he was leaving a meeting to go straight to Asheville, nobody in his right mind would expect him to follow a bee line. Road curves too much. If he did exactly as he said, and went "straight" to Asheville, he would be guilty of a foolish consistency.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," and we agree with ol' Ralph.

Certainly we decry unnecessarily high taxes, local, state or federal, but the key word is "unnecessarily," not "taxes." And we oppose unnecessary governmental encroachment, but the word to keep an eye on is "unneces. sary," not "encroachment."

We believe completely in private industry handling as much of the nation's business as possible, but private industry cannot build highways or town halls, and, except in the rarest of instances, provide recreation facilities for the entire community.

To ask private industry to do so would be ridiculous as well as futile, a truly foolish consistency.

You might as well ask private industry to raise armies to fight the nation's wars.

Taxes, although painful to pay are not evil in themselves. It's the use to which tax money is put which conserns us.

If the town were to tax every resident a dollar a year for the next 10 years just so somebody's nephew could have a job counting the number of fleas on his dog, we'd holler loud and long. That kind of work should be hand led by a flea powder company, or, conceivably by federal entomologists, but not by local government.

On the other hand, if the town government were to propose a tax of a dollar a year per resident to buy land and build and light a couple of ball fields, you'd hear us asking that the tax be hiked to two dollars a person.

As to our "always yelling" for more federal and state money for this community and this area, the charge is only partly true.

We think the idea of a war on poverty is a noble one. We also think it is being badly mishandled on the national level, but that our area's four-county corporation, the Four Square Corporation, is doing a very good job indeed.

We're disgusted with the way big city politicians in the North are using the program's funds to pay high salaries to political hacks and buy votes.

But nothing like that is happening in North Carolina. And the money is there. Somebody's going to get it. Goodness knows we can use it, so why shouldn't we try to get it while the getting's good?

Is it cynical or selfish to put to use here every cent we can lay our hands on, when we know that much of what we don't get will be squandered by, on and for a bunch of thieves who should have been drowned at birth?

By contrast with the much-publicized war on poverty, the Appalachian program seems to be a common sense,

well-administered approach to a geographical problem. The Appalachian program is using the rifle, rather than the shotgun approach.

The war on poverty is being run on the theory that if you shoot enough dollars into the air, some will fall where they'll do some good. Unfortunately, too many sharp operators have big nets to catch the dollars as they

fall. The eleven Appalachian governors, on the other hand, are aiming at specific, not general targets. If we're clamoring for our fair share of the Appalachian program dollars it isn't from selfishness alone. We feel we're doing exactly what we should de.

After all, the Appalachian bill was passed to help solve the problems of one distinct geographical region: Appalachia.

Well, we are in Appalachia, and we have problems. Enough to spread around the rest of the country and still have some left over. So we think it's our plain duty to call attention to them, and to try to get any available money which can help solve them.

Cynical? Selfish? Inconsistent? Maybe. Perhaps. We prefer to call it pragmatic.

But whatever you call our attitude, we're not going to

Not for nobody, nohow. 7

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