

PERSON COUNTY TIMES

A PAPER FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

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SUNDAY, SEPT. 3, 1939

Big-Time Taxpayer . . . . .

It has become something of a political sport to abuse and denounce the chain store industry—but all branches of government would find themselves searching hard for new sources of revenue if the taxes the stores pay were lost to them.

A survey was recently made of 138 leading chain companies, representing all sizes and types, to find out just what they contribute to government in taxes. And it was discovered that in a typical year, their taxes came to 2.94 per cent of their total sales—and more than 60 percent of their earned profits.

It was also found that the chains on the average, pay \$215 in taxes for every employe, and \$3,108 for every store. As evidence that the chains pay every conceivable type of tax that can be levied against retail business, the fact is cited that one typical company had on its books records of payments of 200 different kinds of taxes.

All of this illustrates the folly of any law or movement designed to destroy a legitimate business. The inevitable result is loss of taxes, loss of employment, a decline in property values, and a reduced national income. What this country needs today is more business, not less, if we are to have better times—and more competition, not less, if the consumer is to get a decent break—and more retail outlets, not less, if the farmer and manufacturer are to extend their markets.

The public seems to be slowly awakening to the fact that business-baiting laws destroy employment and raise prices. The thinking people of America, after observing a policy of destruction, want a new policy of construction.

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“Tonight, At Midnight . . . . .

“We hand over our Tennessee Electric properties and a \$2,800,000 tax problem” tonight at midnight, said Wendell L. Willkie, President of the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, in a page advertisement, August 15, 1939, in the Chattanooga and Nashville papers.

Mr. Willkie then reviewed in a clear and forceful manner the outcome of a federal power program that has eliminated a great private electric industry in Tennessee, and \$2,800,000 in taxes which this private enterprise paid annually. He said:

“All of our facilities in Tennessee have been built with the money of many private investors. The communities never had to increase their debts to build plants and distributing systems; they never had to pay out interest on bonds issued for electric service. The savings of thousands of citizens were brought, and would have continued to be brought, into this territory to help produce more industry, more local wealth and more steady jobs.

“We have to sell our electric properties and turn over a splendid organization to the Tennessee Valley Authority and other governmental agencies because we could not stay in business and compete with virtually tax-free and heavily-subsidized plants. We now turn over to government agencies for about four-fifths of its real value, one of the finest public utility services in this or any other country—one representing private investments of about a hundred million dollars.”

In concluding his statement, Mr. Willkie said of friends and associates in Tennessee, “Our hope is they will never be required to defend a business of their own against government subsidized competition.”

Mr. Willkie's company, owned by thousands of citizens, has been eliminated. It was the first to go under the federal power program that has been spread across the nation.

The most important sentence in his statement was the last, in which he expressed the hope that his friends would never be required to defend a business of their own against government subsidized competition. The force that has been set in motion to absorb the rights and interests of private citizens in power production will seek to enlarge its hold over the rights and interests of citizens in other lines of business. The Tennessee Electric Company has been a martyr to the cause of private enterprise.

Midnight, August 15, 1939, will have marked the end of democracy and private enterprise as we have known it for 150 years, unless the policy and the tactics that eliminated this company as a private institution, are reversed.

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“Venturesome Capital” . . . . .

“It is essential that we direct our energies toward every move that will encourage our people to invest in enterprises which will put them back to work.”

That is the view, not of some “Wall Street financier,” but of John W. Hanes, Under Secretary of the Treasury, as expressed in an address before the Indiana Bankers Association. And he said, in addition: “We are confronted today with a great surplus of capital which does not desire to take a change, and a dis-



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tract shortage of that which does. Venturesome capital is needed to induce the investment of cautious capital. New enterprises can be started and old ones that are subject to rapid change can be continued only with capital willing to take a chance. Moreover, even our most stable industries need a margin of enterprising capital willing to absorb the shock of the risks to which even those industries are subject. . . . The employment of a dollar of venturesome capital may permit the employment of several dollars of senior capital, but if no one is willing to take a chance, projects may be abandoned even if the earnings prospects are promising. . . .

“There are a number of places where sympathetic action by government might help restore courage and willingness to launch out in new enterprises.” Risk capital doesn't go “into hiding” because it wants to, but because it is forced to. It is forced there by killing regulatory policies, by taxing policies which take the profit out of successful speculative ventures, while leaving the investor with the losses in case of failure, and by the general political drive against private enterprise as we have known it in the past. Our planned discouragement of investment over a period of years has been far more responsible for the maintenance of depression and employment than most of us realize.

Mr. Hanes told part of the story, but the reason capital is cautious is the point the public must begin to understand.

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Lights . . . . .

Christian Science Monitor

“Lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lighted again in our time.” With strangely compelling wistfulness these words have returned and returned again throughout the last quarter of a century. When, looking out of a window on the gray half-light over London, Britain's Foreign Secretary in 1914 spoke them, they were figurative. They meant that all that was best and brightest in human achievement was going into an eclipse from which “in our time” it would never wholly emerge.

Once again lights have been going out over Europe. But this time the statement is literal. And one may note with more than ordinary interest that they have not yet begun to go out all over Europe. In London and Paris, yes; but not in Berlin. That city, as described just after Sir Neville Henderson presented Britain's reply to Reichs-fuhrer Hitler, was bright.

In London, newspaper offices hid their windows under heavy curtains. In Paris the boulevardiers sat in the sidewalk cafes, their faces blue and blotchy in the eerie rays of lighting that is not to be seen from the sky. Berlin, like London and Paris, were prepared against air raids. But evidently Berlin did not feel it necessary to anticipate a sudden, unannounced attack. It is clear that German officialdom, if not the German people, know with whom the initiative for mass slaughter must lie, and that this rests with Germany.

“War guilt” is not so easily placed as this may indicate, however. The responsibilities for the conditions that lead to war must be shared by millions upon millions of human beings in that measure which their own selfishness or selflessness determines. Charles A. Beard has well said that it is what we all do in peacetime that takes us toward war.

But on the brink of war, and aware of being there, peoples would turn on the lights again and try to find a better way. If all their leaders can now join in this search for the better way instead of insisting only on those ways which satisfy selfishness, the lights all over Europe can be lighted again in our time.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

From The Adult Student

ISAIAH: A LIFE DEDICATED TO GOD

While little is known of the boyhood of Isaiah, his intimate acquaintance with the ways of the king's court would indicate that he enjoyed all the advantages of education and social intercourse that were open to the sons of prominent citizens of Jerusalem. He lived at a time when Judah's political entanglements with other nations were most serious. His position was that the nation's safety consisted in reliance upon God and in neutrality in the quarrels of Assyria and Egypt. And when his advice was followed the issue was always a happy one; never was it happy when disregarded.

Isaiah's Call To Service

Our scripture lesson today is one of the most important in all of the Bible. It describes in words of rare beauty the dedication of a man's life to the service of God and his fellow man. The words are heard and spoken in a vision, but they cannot be called visionary in any shallow sense; and they are intensely practical for even the twentieth century.

“In the year the king Uzziah died,” Isaiah may have just come from the royal chamber in which the dead king lay in state. His mind was full of the tragic events that brought to an end the mighty reign of Uzziah. He saw as never before the dangers that confronted the young and struggling nation. His heart yearned to be of service.

Out of the sense of deep need came a vision of God. And while this vision may seem somewhat unusual and extraordinary to us, yet it was in harmony with the manner in which God revealed himself to men in ancient times. The important point for us to remember is that Isaiah came face to face with God. For the first time, he saw clearly what God wanted him to do.

Down through the ages the men who have accomplished great things for the world have been the men who, like Isaiah, have had great visions of God. Saul of Tarsus, on the Damascus road, saw Jesus Christ and from that vision came the power to become the greatest missionary the world has ever known. Martin Luther, in a prison cell, saw a vision of the spiritual, and out of it came

the Protestant Reformation with a thousand blessings for the weak and oppressed. In modern times David Livingstone saw with the eyes of faith a cleansed and redeemed Africa, and today Africa is blessed with the light of the gospel of Christ.

America needs to catch a fresh vision of God. Every minister and layman in this land needs to hear anew the call of God to active service in curing the evils and righting the wrongs that oppress the people of this world. This is no time for passive or half-hearted service to the King of kings.

Where did Isaiah see the vision and hear the call of God? In the temple where he was accustomed to go for worship! Does that fact have a message for us today? Surely, there is no better place for one to seek the presence of God than the church. It need not be a magnificent cathedral with all the rich adornments that money can buy; it may be a simple chapel in some quiet and secluded spot; but whatever its size or style of architecture, it is God's house where he may be found by all who seek him humbly and reverently.

Isaiah's Response To God's Call

God first showed to Isaiah the need for a bold and fearless prophet to carry the truth to an unclean and backslidden people. Suddenly, the terrible truth dawned upon Isaiah's mind that he was the one to whom God was looking for help. “Here am I; send me.” Nobler words than these never fell from the lips of mortal man. And when Isaiah sought an explanation of the message that God would have him deliver to the people of Judah, his heart sank within him at the terms of the divine command. God let him know that in spite of all that he could say or do the notion would disappoint him by refusing to turn from the ways of evil. But Isaiah, God said, must keep on preaching until there was no one left to preach to.

It is impossible to think of a more difficult task. Isaiah's only source of encouragement was the hope that a small remnant of the people would escape the terrible fate which was to befall the nation and that through them God's will would finally triumph in the world.

God's Call To Us What Is Our Answer?

Isaiah's call was unusual and out of the ordinary. Few people in all recorded history have been called to service in as spectacular a manner as Isaiah. To most men God makes himself known in other and more normal ways. It was through these normal ways that God came to Hosea, Amos, Micah, Jeremiah, and others of the ancient Hebrew prophets.

Some modern Christians, like Isaiah, know just the day and hour when their consecration call came, followed by their consecration answer; others grow unconsciously into Christian life. John Greenleaf Whittier describes Charles Sumner's gradual yet steady championship of the oppressed slaves before the War between the States in these words: “No trumpet sounded in his ear, He saw not Sinai's cloud and flame;

But never yet to Hebrew seer A clearer voice of duty came.”

And so it is with many modern Christians. They have never seen or heard anything that one could count as miraculous evidence of God's presence; yet, like Charles Sumner, they know that they have heard and answered God's call.

But there is one thing that we need to keep in mind. In all probability, we shall never hear or know God's call if we do not put ourselves in the way of hearing it. Isaiah went to church, and there he caught the vision. We cannot expect God to reveal himself to a person unless that person opens his heart to God's revelation. We must be willing to hear and to obey before God's voice can become audible to our ears. A story is told of an English army officer, who, when asked how long it would take him to get ready to start for India, replied, “I am ready now.” The challenge to the modern Christian is, “Are you ready now to start wherever

God may want you to go?” If you are, God has doubtless told you already where to begin work. And that is what is needed most today—men and women who are ready and willing to start work on any task that needs doing in God's world.”

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