

LOOKING AT WASHINGTON

By HUGO S. SIMS, Washington Correspondent

Anti-Trust Laws Protect Free Competition in Nation
 "The trend toward concentration of control over business and industry and the elimination of small business has grown alarmingly during the last several decades," declares Wendell Berge, Assistant Attorney General of the United States.

Mr. Berge points out that it was estimated in 1929 that 200 non-financial corporations controlled 49 per cent of the assets of all such corporations but by 1933 the percentage had increased to 56 per cent. These corporations were directed nominally by about 2,000 individuals but actually the control rested in the hands of a smaller number of men.

Other comparative statistics, cited by the official, reveal that in 1909 there were 268,000 manufacturing establishments in this country with total products valued at 20 billion dollars. In 1939, with 39,000,000 additional people in the nation, the number of manufacturing plants had dropped to 184,000 enterprises, but production was valued at 56 billion dollars.

The man responsible for the enforcement of the anti-trust laws gives some additional figures that reveal the gradual loss of opportunity for enterprise in this country. Fifty years ago there were 15,000 tobacco manufacturers; now there are less than 800, with four major companies dominating the entire industry. The number of manufacturers of lumber and timber products has dropped from 28,000 to 12,000. In steel and iron the figures are 700 and 350.

No wonder that Mr. Berge concludes that, "in another generation, unless the trend is reversed, there will be no opportunity for a business man, no matter how ingenious or well financed or daring he may be, to enter any of the hundred or so basic industries in this country, except by the tolerance and patronage of the three or four companies controlling the entire industry. In other words, competition will have ceased to exist."

While every American, with a few exceptions, advocates free economy, not many agree in defining the term. Some mean freedom from government control, which they identify with supervision of industry. Few of these people "think of control as regulation or regimentation of industry by private authority . . . more sinister in its effect upon freedom than governmental control because it substitutes complete irresponsibility for the checks and balances of public opinion."

Summers Offers Service to Restore State Rights

Hatton W. Summers, third oldest member of the House of Representatives, where he has served thirty-four years, announces that he will not seek re-election when his present term expires. This is unusual in itself but the reasons given by the Texan for his decision deserve the attention of every American who is interested in the successful operation of our system of government.

Mr. Summers says he has watched his generation, "under both parties," has been doing "to the greatest system of democratic government ever evolved through the process of the ages" and what he has seen leaves him greatly disturbed. Consequently, he offers his services "to the states" should they "be willing to make an effort to regain their sovereignty and re-establish their power."

The veteran legislator thinks that the Federal government should be stripped to its prime functions so that "it may be operated under laws enacted by Congress instead of largely by directives emanating from an appointed, unsupervised personnel." He points out that the policy-fixing

and legislative power, "the most basic of the essential powers of Congress, have largely been shifted to the executive agencies and organized minorities."

This is a serious indictment of the processes in the national capital. It is a defect in our present style of government. It stems no doubt, from the stubborn unwillingness of the states to levy taxes to finance the assumption of modern duties and a willingness on their part to permit the Federal government, through its spending, to assume many of the powers that should belong to, and under the Constitution do belong to, the states.

A Congressman, according to Mr. Summers, finds his time largely taken up "as a go-between for his constituents" and the governmental agencies, "writing innumerable letters . . . Inadequate time is left for the duties of statesmanship at a time when our circumstances require of us the highest type of statesmanship ever required, perhaps, of any people." This leaves practically no time for a member of Congress "to be home and explain legislation and defend his position."

The government, according to Congressman Summers has become "extravagant, wasteful, inefficient and by its nature the instrument of favoritism, tyranny, oppression and corruption, and the destroyer of the self-reliance and self-respect and governmental capacity of the people—qualities without which no people can remain free." He finds a "great piled-up mass of Government confusion beyond human comprehension, impossible of democratic control."

This is a serious indictment but the facts, we are afraid, bear out the charge and the condemnation. There have been, as the Texan avers, efforts to put over "mythological tales as to the origin of our Constitution" and, we add, a strenuous attempt to persuade unthinking Americans that it set up a framework of centralization that can solve every human problem by yielding to the clamor of the greedy without regard to the principles of good government.

Record Reveals Franco Was Ready To Aid Axis

The Franco Government of Spain protested against the Three-Power appeal to the Spanish people to oust the Dictator, saying that the Government of Spain is a matter of domestic decision and terming the diplomatic note as "foreign intervention."

This question has been discussed recently by Walter Lippman, newspaper columnist, who points out that many Americans have become confused in their thinking and that some of them have taken the same position that the Spanish Government asserts. This is due to a misunderstanding of the facts, he points out, which show very clearly that Franco, like the Argentine Government, was not neutral during the war, but did everything possible to aid our enemies in their effort to destroy this country. Obviously, as Mr. Lippman says, the United States has nothing to do with the internal affairs of Spain only so long as the government set up by the Spanish people has nothing to do with the safety, security and existence of the United States. The Franco Government, tied hand and foot to the Axis powers, rendered definite assistance to our enemies. This was clearly shown by the release of official information in Washington.

Mr. Lippman points out that it does not matter "whether Franco and Peron are dictators or democrats, or whether they have the approval of ten per cent or forty per cent or of ninety per cent of their people." Calling attention to the fact that Portugal carried out faithfully her international obligations not to aid our enemies. Consequently, we have no quarrel with Portugal or with the Latin-American dictatorships which did not aid our enemies.

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Truman And Bowles Attack Greedy Lobbies

President Truman, speaking in Columbus, Ohio, and addressing the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, told the church group: "A truly religious fervor among our people would go a long way toward obtaining a national health program, a national housing program and an extended and improved social security program."

In addition, the President told of "certain interests" who were "greedy for gold" and were putting pressure upon Congress and lobbying to kill the Price Control Act, to keep down minimum wages and to permit the "further concentration of economic power."

Only the day before, Chester Bowles, now in charge of what is called economic stabilization, told the National Farmers Union at Topeka, Kansas, that "irresponsible, reckless, greedy lobbies" are trying to "eliminate or wreck the only controls between our people and inflation." He warned that "to lose the fight means disaster and that to win it will probably pave the way for a future of sustained prosperity."

The millions of "inarticulate little people" have against them, said Mr. Bowles, "some of the most irresponsible, reckless, greedy organizations in America."

Getting down to brass tacks, the speaker referred to some of the organizations, naming the lobbyists of the National Association of Manufacturers and the heads of the National Retail Drygoods Association, blaming the latter for certain "phony propaganda" designed to "cash in on the apparel shortage."

In addition, Mr. Bowles said he was talking about some real estate lobbies, the packers lobby, the textile lobby, the dairy lobby, the lobbyists seeking advantage for the groups they represent and the "speculators in the commodity markets" and in Wall Street who are trying to secure speculative profits and are "irresponsibly whooping it up for inflation."

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We are inclined to agree with the President and Mr. Bowles in their appraisal of the serious consequences that will result to the country unless the people convince Congress to ignore the lobbyists referred to. We are even willing to subscribe to

the optimistic predictions of "sustained prosperity" if the nation manages to hold its economy on a stable price basis during the immediate future and until production provides the goods and services to take up the slack money that is in the hands of individuals and corporations.

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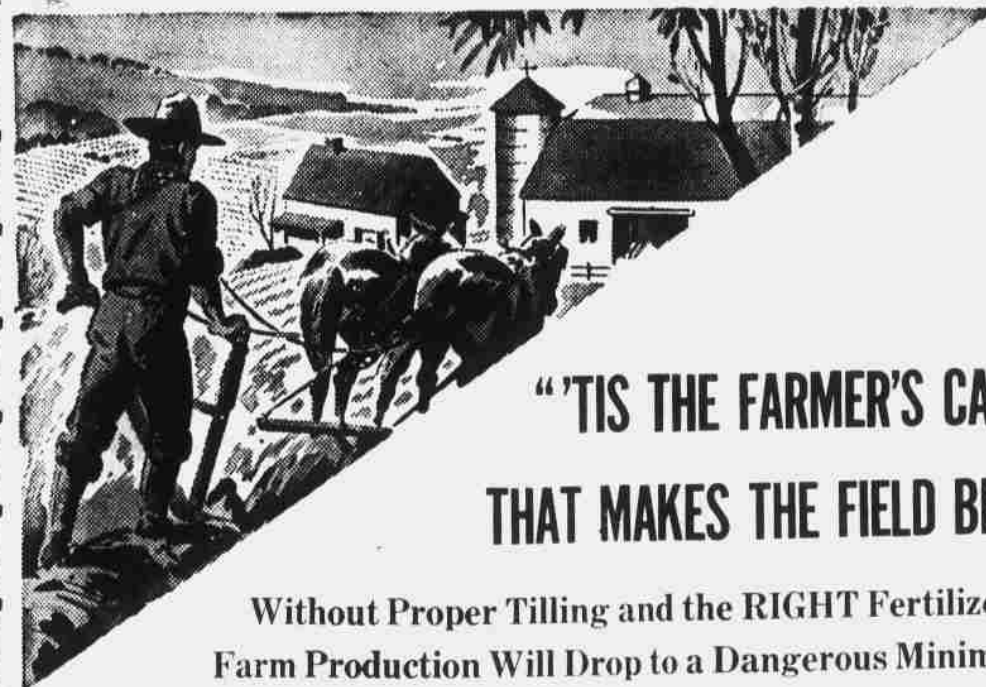
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