

# Two-Timing Us With Two Prices

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Has our Secretary of Agriculture discovered, at long last, the real solution for all the ills of life in country and city? Or is he just proposing one more application of the principle of special privileges?

His latest suggestion is that we subsidize at the same time both the farmers and the lower paid among the city population, presumably about a third of the latter (since the President considers that a third are "ill clothed, ill housed, ill fed"). The low-paid workers are NOT to be subsidized, however, by paying them money and ALLOWING THEM TO SPEND THIS MONEY AS THEY PLEASE AND FOR WHAT THEY FEEL THEY MOST NEED. While such an arrangement might be most satisfying to them, IT WOULD NOT PROVIDE ANY GRAVY FOR THE POLITICALLY MUCH LOVED FARMERS, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, THE OWNERS OF BIG PLANTATIONS. No, the poorer workers must take their subsidies in the form of lower prices, offered only to them, on goods coming originally from the farms, such as clothing made from cotton, bread and flour made from wheat and corn, and other goods the disposal of which will aid the farmers' sales. Thus are the poor to be stimulated to use up more of the farm output, so as to leave less of these goods for the middle class and make—or keep—prices to this class high. Thus the farmers will, presumably, get a high price on all they sell to the middle class. And as regards what is sold to the lower paid workers, the government is, apparently, to buy this produce from the farmers AT A PRICE SATISFACTORY TO THE LATTER, although selling it for a good deal less.

The government will then have to make up for its loss by the levy of taxes. On what classes the burden of these taxes is to rest we are not told. BUT IT'S A SAFE GUESS THAT NO TAXES FOR THIS PURPOSE WILL BE LEVIED ON LAND VALUES, AS SUCH, EITHER IN CITY OR COUNTRY, and IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING TO FIND THE MONEY RAISED BY SO-CALLED PROCESSING TAXES ON THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE. In that case, some of our people who

are NOT QUITE poor enough to be favored with the discriminatingly low prices may be made poorer than some of the plan's beneficiaries.

But how are these low prices favoring the low-wage groups to be managed? What is to prevent others, not listed for the low price privilege, from nevertheless purchasing at these low prices? Obviously, there must be some system of distribution of cards, or names and photographs or names and finger prints, to identify the individuals who are allowed to buy goods at the low prices and distinguish them from persons who must pay higher prices. More NEW DEAL "democracy,"—this time in the form of making a record of the low-paid, providing them with favored prices at government expense, taxing the rest of the people to pay for the favors given, and at the same time subsidizing farmers!

But what if some of the low-paid groups should try to buy plentiful supplies of the goods offered them at the low prices and RESELL them to others, thus making a little profit for themselves and GIVING EVERYBODY THE ADVANTAGE OF THE LOW PRICES AT THE TAXPAYERS' EXPENSE? Clearly, this could not be permitted. The favored persons must be limited and regulated. Each must be allowed only his specified amount of bread, cotton cloth, corn meal and tobacco at the discriminatingly low price, lest he sell the excess to someone else who is not on the favored list! Hence, retail dealers must, presumably, be held responsible for keeping each privileged buyer within his quota of purchases at the privileged prices. In that case, privileged buyers can purchase any article on which they are entitled to a specially low price, only at a specified place. And the proprietor or manager of that place must keep a careful record of each such purchase. MORE regimentation! Regimentation not only of the farmers but also of grocers, clothiers and dry goods merchants. The fa-

vored purchasers will select what they are permitted at the special price, show their cards or ask for a checking of the store records, and then pay at the privileged rate. Or else the government must itself distribute the reduced-price goods to the favored consumers through government establishments, and the necessary regulations and limitations will be applied there. For, in any case, regulations and limitations there must be.

How shall the favored citizens be selected? Will all those who make less than \$1,000 a year be put on the list regardless of whether they live in New York City, or in the country, where it is easy to raise fruits and vegetables? Will the test be family income regardless of the size of the family or will it be the per capita income of the family or what? How much allowance shall be made, if any, for sickness in a family, which necessarily requires draining away part of the family income for doctor and medicine? Will those who desire the benefit of the reduced prices be expected to make formal application? How much investigation will then be required to determine whether the income is low enough, the cost of living in the locality high enough, the number of children in the family large enough and the burden from sickness great enough, to justify a permit for the discriminatingly low prices? Will serious attempt be made to include all of the one third who are "ill clothed, ill housed, ill fed"? Will the granting of permits be influenced, in some cases, by whether the applicant votes "right"? Will it take only a TINY force of government administrators and clerks to gather the requisite information, keep it up to date, and prevent enjoyment of the low prices by persons not intended to enjoy them?

Will our people finally revolt against the increasing government control and limitation of individual freedom, and retire to private life the leaders responsible for this control? Or are we becoming so accustomed to ubiquitous and omnipresent regulations that such regulation will henceforth be submitted to without objection or serious criticism?

It seems that we are well on the road to the loss of freedom, and, perhaps, on the road to a Nazi state.



And by methods not greatly dissimilar to those practiced by Nazi leaders and followed by slick politicians in all times and places, viz., by appealing to the prejudices and desires and something-for-nothing instincts of the biased and the self-seeking. "Give us power to regulate your lives," they say, "and we will give you something at others' expense."

It is not through the activities of a few organizations of foreign born, whether "bunds" or anything else, that we are in danger of losing our boasted freedom. And there is certainly no immediate prospect of our losing it through revolution. We are likely to lose it—we have already partly lost it—in less perceptible and more insidious ways. Those who would regiment us, do it through mass bribery—bribery of low-paid workers, bribery of cotton farmers, bribery of tobacco growers, bribery of the producers of wheat and corn, bribery of the beneficiaries of a protective tariff. The members of each group may resent and denounce the privileges accorded to the others. But the members of each group are, in large part, eager to have the power of government used to take something from the others and give it to themselves.

The ideal of liberalism in an earlier generation was the abolition of privilege. By no means all of those who then thought of themselves as liberals were opposed to all forms of privilege. Not a few of them were unable to recognize privilege as such, in some of its forms. Nevertheless, their general philosophy was one of opposition to privilege and of support for political leaders who would limit or abolish it. But such is obviously not the philosophy or ideal of those who have lately appropriated the terms "liberal" and "liberalism." These present-day "liberals"—whose influence is so strong in New Deal legislation, are less eager to abolish privilege than to extend it. They are less eager to do away with schemes by which large groups get something for nothing at the expense of others than to increase the number of those so favored. The more some of our citizens have their hands in the pockets of other citizens, the better these New Deal "liberals" seem to be pleased. But this is definitely NOT the way to build either a good society or a strong nation.

To those now guiding the affairs of our country, it is either a matter of no importance at all or else it is a matter for congratulation, that a majority of our people must pay a

minority for the very PERMISSION to work on and to live on the earth, in any except extremely undesirable locations. The fact that a majority must pay tremendous sums to a comparatively few for location advantages produced by COMMUNITY development is not a matter of apparent concern to any of the leaders of the New Deal. The fact that the masses of our people, from one end of our country to the other, must pay heavy taxes in their food and clothing bills, in order to RELIEVE landowners of taxes on the COMMUNITY-PRODUCED value of their land, does not seem to concern them. Nor are they seemingly concerned at all by the fact that labor's productivity is reduced—and the wages at which employment can be obtained thereby kept down—by the speculative holding out of use of good land in every one of our cities, and of various natural resources. Indeed, so far as agricultural land is to be considered in this connection, the New Deal has PAID the owners—and not poor farmers only but well-to-do-plantation owners and big corporations as well—to hold their land out of use. Never in our history, so much as in this "wonderful" New Deal period, has there been so well exemplified the observation of Count Tolstoi that the "classes" are willing to do anything whatever for the "masses" EXCEPT to get OFF THEIR BACKS.

Certainly the government has shown itself willing—under our very "liberal" New Deal leadership—to give the farmers help at the expense of the city worker consumers. And now it seems that the same leadership may be willing, through the new proposal of Secretary Wallace, to give some of the poorer workers help at the expense of other workers who are not quite so poor.

So far, there has been no suggestion from any one high in the administration, in favor of using ANY PART of the billions of dollars of natural resource values and community-produced location values FOR ANY PUBLIC PURPOSE AT ALL. Other forms of income may be subject to administrative criticism and attack. But the income from land

because others must pay them for—the income that a few can derive permission to work on and to live on the earth, to enjoy the bounty of nature, and to make use of community-produced location advantages—this income our "liberal" New Deal leaders have no apparent desire to attack or criticize in any manner or to subject to any special tax.

Yet let us not despair. Perhaps some day we shall have a President—conceivably, even, a Secretary of Agriculture—who does not merely sympathize with the "ill clothed, ill housed and ill fed," and propose bungling and freedom-destroying schemes for their relief, but who truly understands what steps are necessary and just to bring them relief, and who is willing to lend his voice and the influence of his great office to an advocacy of the way of freedom,—including the equal freedom of all to use the earth.

