

Some Thoughts on The Legal Profession

THE West Publishing Company periodically issues a little pamphlet captioned "The Docket." And what has this to do with Single Tax? Let's see.

The primary purpose of "The Docket" is to entertain and to educate embryo lawyers who are in the stages of processing peculiar to law schools.

We like "The Docket's" attractiveness, illuminations, and entertainments drawn from real life with all its ramifications of sincerity, simplicity, complexity, stupidity, broad and narrow mindedness, comedy, tragedy, truth and error. It makes brevity beautiful, in marked contrast to the law profession's verbiage, surplusage, redundancy and wind-jamming.

It has had our early attention during our law school days and during our post-graduate work. It offers a refreshing respite from this hectic nation's current jitters over wars and rumors of wars, balancing budgets, tax reform, tax torture, tax treatises and tax tirades in a social chaos which these United States might well seek to solve.

As we strove to forget the daily economic headache—as we perused page after page of "The Docket"—we came upon the following eulogy:

"Lawyers predominate in positions of trust and honor in every community in our land. This outstanding expression of confidence in the legal profession by their fellow citizens is irrefutable testimony of the legal fraternity's integrity and its essential contributions to the nation's welfare and progress."

Elsewhere we have learned that lawyers constitute 60 per cent of our national Congress. Through experience we have learned that lawyers dominate the legislative branches of state government. Through experience we have learned that the profession's point of view prevails in trials regardless of a totally different scientific comprehension of a subject far removed from that of law.

There can be no doubt of the profession's greater influence, in shaping national thought and life, as compared with that of any other trade or profession. It is futile to deny that our confidence, in the past at least, has been bestowed upon lawyers. Their preponderance in number upon our public committees, boards, commissions, administrations, and what-not, attest to this.

In view of all this "predominance" and "essential contributions" to our national life, we pause to inquire from whence cometh our nation's civic jitters, tax torture, depressions, labor-capital rows, WPA'S, and the need for welfare alms, etc., etc. With a predominance of lawyers in key positions, then the predominant thought—in charting the social course—should stem from the profession's integrity, competency and concern over human needs—except if it happens that the tail wags the dog—except if the non-dominant forces run the steam roller over the dominant legal leaders. Such

exceptions at once destroy the significance of the eulogy.

By what miraculous manipulation—during three centuries—can a growing dominance of learned lawyers be rendered impotent by a non-dominant thought, force or faction? The profession is either dominant or it is not.

If "The Docket" is ready to amplify (or modify) its eulogy and say, in effect, that our learned lawyers have all the attributes contained in the eulogy, but have done a bad job in running this nation into its worst depression 'midst its greatest accumulations of wealth, then the national result contradicts the eulogy. If "predominance" has any significance, then the cause of our industrial chaos traces back to our civic leaders, be they mice, men, maids or lawyers; it traces back to our dominating thought, force or faction. If "consequence" has any significance, then, in the present instance, "The Docket's" eulogy merely is the tinkling of brass and the sounding of cymbals as white elephants, mad with pride, prance to the plaudits of a worshipping populace.

The "consequence" of economic chaos cannot fairly be labeled "Exhibit I—An Act of God" Or can it?

We must reconcile "dominance" and "consequence" if we are not to destroy the common import of our English language. If the one contradicts the other we are talking twaddle. We may accept the significance of the word "dominance," and if we do then the consequence lies at the door of that word no matter who attempts to wear it as a halo. We may accept the significance of social consequence in the present instance, and if we do, it means either (1) the lawyers do *not* predominate, or (2) they haven't brought the most essential contributions to the nation's welfare and progress.

In a future article we shall present evidence of a most serious nature relating to the fundamental laws in "real property"—laws from which flow most of the industrial chaos, poverty, vice, crime and disease now afflicting our so-called civilization. Those who have read Henry George's "Science of Political Economy," together with our modern and ancient text-books and case-books upon laws governing society, quite easily can read the fundamental cause of social ills which have come to overwhelm men, women and children. In the pages of "real property" text-books is exposed the "predominance" of the legal profession in its thought, force and faction. Herein lies its real contribution to the welfare and progress of a people now distraught. Dishonesty of lawyers, upon which our daily papers frequently comment, fortunately has nothing to do with the matter. Lawyers are as honest as anyone can be under the circumstances.

An accurate eulogy of the law profession remains to be written. We have had our fill of hearkening to our legal fraternity claim all the credit and glory whilst being painfully silent over the "consequence" flowing from "predominance." The future of civilization is in too precarious a position to permit professional pride to take precedence.

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