

W E L D S A U N D E R S C A R T E R

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MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

Leisure Village, Fox Lake, Illinois

May 20, 1989

Weld once said:

Privilege is exclusion. Get rid of it! Repeal all laws, state, local, federal -- that restrict people from working.

(on social security) If, as trustee, you invest in your own liabilities, how'n hades will there be anything left when payday comes?

(on communicating with politicians) The one thing you must not do is to point out that 2 and 2 does not equal 3 or 5.

As for "what's good for General Motors is good for the country," that's backwards. What's good for the country is ultimately the only thing that is good for General Motors.

Corruption comes out of special privileges. It's silly to talk about corrupt people so long as you support corrupt institutions. 7/8/81

It is shockingly immoral for Congress to have imposed this inflation on us and then provide for their own immunity from it (cost of living increases and raises regardless of performance).

Congress makes its living by restricting the individual's freedom of choice. 3/14/82

The best thing McNamara ever did was to put the generals in their place, and the worst thing was to teach them how to be efficient.

Alcatraz is no worse than the Indian reservations.

The Indians had the concept of land being common property, but not the concept of community services. Perhaps because of the communities being so small, and the nomadic character of their life they had no need for such arrangements?

The silliest thing in the world is this idea that there is a social cost when we buy oil from the Arabs and no social cost when we buy oil from the domestic landlords. It makes no difference to me as an oil consumer whether from Arabs or Texans. Congressman Weicher talks as though this were an international issue. He really believes in the old mercantile theory. 10/25/76

Texas taught OPEC all they know. 8/29/80

We keep trying to shore up existing institutions instead of getting at the root causes, building up more scar tissue rather than getting at the underlying disease. 11/11/76

The thing I can do is to somehow attract people and get them to come along—I don't teach them, I get them to come along, and to keep coming along.

(on the purpose of a particular memo to TRED members) To stimulate them to the greatness of the possibilities of TRED and so motivate them to give their utmost intellectually and spiritually to TRED.

(about his favorite author) James Branch Cabell says in his novel, Beyond Life, that he had never known a consciously wicked man.

Economic and ethical effects are always harmonious---that's what's so beautiful.

There's no one that comes close to him (Beethoven) in bringing so much language to music. 3/2/68

Mysteries are undiscovered natural laws.

What egotism to think man can give God glory!

From a letter to a colleague September 3, 1981, five days before he went completely blind:

Dear - - - - :

.... TRED came into being because a small group of scholars believed that economics, as taught and as practiced, had blinders on, that it was ignoring an aspect of its field that was of fundamental importance. It sought to provide a forum in which these blinders could be, even if only temporarily, removed. It did not seek to impose doctrinaire conclusions. It sought merely to encourage discussion, pro and con, of aspects of its field that had obviously been under a stigma of taboo.

For perspective, let me recall certain historic highlights.

After Woodrow Wilson became President in 1913, three things happened: the income tax became law; the Federal Reserve System was instituted; and the Monroe Doctrine (bad as it had become in practice) was replaced by a new role for this country as the leading World Power.

Following these changes of the Wilson era came the end of the free entry of foreigners in the late '20's.

In 1913 we had a Federal budget of approximately \$1 billion, and a Federal debt of about the same. During Wilson's regime both grew tremendously. Economists played an important role in this transformation.

By 1920 the economy had faltered, a new Republican regime displaced the Democrats, and a new wave of prosperity ensued. On almost all sides it appeared that the "new economics" had succeeded.

The agony of the economic stagnation of 1929-1939 was not relieved by another "new economics." It was exchanged for the horrors of World War II. By 1950 or so Sumner Slichter could write (in the Atlantic or Harper's) that Keynes had been proven wrong: that the idea of expanding Federal debt and the money supply in bad times and reversing the procedure in good times was wrong. What was needed was a constant increase in the money supply at a fixed rate.

All this time economics had been growing in sophistication, in complexity, in language. It had flowered in the dawning age of the computer and the advent of econometrics.

Today we have a Federal budget of close to \$1 trillion and a Federal debt, nominally of that same amount by the latest count, but running to 3-4 trillions when all future commitments are included.

What economics has done has been to accept certain man-made institutions as given and then proceed to devise elaborate patches and repairs to try to make them operable. Yet, when we look at the situation in this country, for instance, first at the Federal level and then, successively, at the state and local levels, we can but feel that we are ensnared in a tangled network of practices that are beyond the talents of our best minds to unravel.

And this in the United States of America - if not the best of all possible worlds, surely the best of existing countries in this world.

What then of the less fortunate countries? What of the once-great British Empire? What of France, of Italy? What of the Central and South American countries? What of the Near East? What of oil-rich Iran? What of Poland, of the USSR?

If present-day economics cannot "make it work" in the U.S., what hope is there for the rest of the world? Clearly, patch-work repairs will never correct the fundamental errors we have built into our social institutions. Only fundamental changes will avail. And it should be the job of economists, above all other social scientists, to search out these errors and prescribe the necessary reforms. What greater challenge can be offered to any class of scientists?

This general awareness, if not expressed, must have been the motivation to the half dozen scholars who brought TRED into existence. This was no group of zealots wanting to foist a panacea on its fellows. It believed that the taxation of land values was of sufficient potential to warrant the attention of its fellow scientists and it offered its services to this end. In the current state of the world crisis, may I express my hope that TRED will not be diverted from its original purpose?

When one contemplates the wonders of the accomplishments of the human mind in the physical sciences and in mathematics, how shocking are the deficiencies in the social field! It had been my goal for TRED that it should help rescue economics from the morass of its own creation. That is still my hope