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Our Defense

News of our defense program is confusing. The pessimists say that everything has bogged down, and that chaos rules. The optimists say all is going well. The truth seems to lie between. Industry is at last getting geared to defense production—a tremendous job, for which it had little experience. And some of the bugs have been ironed out in the various government defense bureaus.

Production is nothing to write home about, as yet. However, some of the coolest observers think this situation will undergo real change before long—that, once the stage is all set, a great flood of materials will pour forth.

Defense officials have been chary of diverting peace-time production—now it seems that we must reduce the manufacture of some ordinary goods. We can't build for war and maintain normal production at the same time. Don't be surprised if next year the custom of bringing out new model motor cars is temporarily abanded.

So far, there has been no severe price problem—no need for strict government control. All hope that situation will continue.

Duty of the State

In the opening and closing days of the legislature now in session, scores of bills were introduced. A considerable proportion of them involved revenue and taxation, all of them would, if passed, impose a further drain on the taxpayers.

That is the normal tendency of state legislatures throughout the country. But in these highly abnormal times, the lawmakers face an obvious duty which so far seems to have been generally over looked. That duty is to spare state expenditures to the bone.

This year we will pay higher Federal taxes. And, as every informed person knows, the increases so far approved by Congress mark but a very short step along a very long road. Further tax boost cannot be postponed for long—Federal income is now not meeting the regular expenses of government, to say nothing of the tremendous appropriations made for defense. In short, we are going to pay record-breaking Federal taxes, and the general standard of living will suffer accordingly.

The state's don't pay for war machines. The world emergency has imposed no special burdens on them. And that goes for towns and school districts and counties and all the other myriad taxing bodies that cover the country. Local government must retrench as it never retrenched before. The best brains in local governments, from governors down to village officials, must figure out how tax savings can be made. Let that be remembered by the many state legislatures which will hold their biennial sessions during 1941.

Making the Tax Return

One reason why people get fussed up in making out an income tax return, is that they do not keep careful accounts. When they need exact figures, they find they have no record of some transaction. Too frequently they relied on their recollection. Human memory is a kind of greased skid.

Many people do not carefully read the instructions printed on the tax blank. They see a few words here and there, and jump at conclusions. If they had read the whole sentence, they would see what they should do.

People need not put all their grey matter to work when it comes to figuring out a tax return. If they allow some of that grey matter to go to sleep, they may spoil half dozen blanks, and then find their return was made out wrong and will not pass. Many unnecessary headaches could be avoided. Making out an income return should not be regarded as a dreaded or unhappy task. People should be thankful they have income enough to call for such a return.

Not Too Hot — Not Too Cold

By JOHN EMBERT

Delaware Blue Law

Delaware gave its young 200 years old blue law a workout Sunday, March 1. 500 persons were arrested with a fines of $4 to $8, or 24 hours in the jailhouse—tobacco not accepted for fines.

Gasoline stations were closed and operators arrested, truck drivers, church goers had to walk, a minister and operator were broadcasting a sermon, children not allowed to use their sleds, or snow ball; Sunday newspapers, soft drinks, ice cream and drugs came under the ban.

The Attorney-General took the bull by the horns and took one of the representatives, who opposed modification, in his auto to show him the side-lights in hope he induce a bill for repeal or modification at the present session of the legislature.

The temperature Monday was 107 in the Legislature over the blue laws, and it look to us over the line that the blue law will pick the men from the boys in the legislature now in session.

Safety Driving Courses for Schools

I believe that I am voicing the opinion of the students of schools who have taken the safety-driving course. Speaking for myself, however, I believe it would be a grave mistake if House Bill 185 is not passed. This bill makes provisions for teaching the course in all the counties in Maryland. This course benefits the student by teaching him or her to become a more sane, safe driver.

This is the way a High School girl tells her experience:

"Before I took the course I had dreided to obtain my license, but when I looked through my textbook I became aware of just how ignorant I really was. This was proven to me as I studied the book under the excellent supervision of my teacher. A little later in the I drove the safety car and made my first acquaintance with a member of the State police. I had always looked upon 'cops' (pardon my slang) as the proverbial 'ogres.' Now I realize that they are really our friends, and that they are trying to save the lives of the innocent from carelessness and ignorance

"I would not insult a State trooper by saying I do not believe he would arrest me because I was his former pupil. In truth, I believe he would sooner arrest me, because I have been taught to know the results of careless driving.

"In view of these things, why can't we have safety instructions in all of our schools? Surely the few dollars spent would more than pay in the saving of human lives in the years to come!"

Carry Our Own Weight.

Do you carry your own weight along the road of life and town progress? Some people seem like passengers who simply ride in a car for which someone else furnishes the motive power. These deadweight passengers contribute nothing to pull the town ahead.

Of course anyone who does good work in his occupation helps his home town, so he can't be deadweight. But a person who never does anything to help the home causes of improvement and business, or social and religious progress, can be called a partial dead weight. He is not carrying his full weight, and he is asking his neighbors and townspeople to do the things that need to be done for the development of his community.

Modify the Whipping-Post Bill

I was very glad indeed to read that the women members of our Legislature sponsored the defeat of a bill to repeal the whipping post law. It is claimed by a few that the whipping law is a relic of barbarism; that we cannot live by the light of four thousand years ago. But I believe it is acknowledged by the wisest among men that the whipping post is the most effective deterrent for wife beating yet deivsed.

Skakepeake declared that he who would speak unkindly to a lady is a brute. What is a man who would go to his home drunk and whip his wife? I believe I speak the sentiment of seventy-five per cent. of the people when I say "Better by far to amend the whippingpost law to include those that will steal, swear at their parents and commit other crimes."

I acknowledge the fact that to many people the pain of conscience is a terror beyond the fear of physical suffering. But to some the fear of physical suffering is a greater deterrent against crime then mental pain.

Two Little Words

Mussolini has a word for it. To be precise, he has two words for it. They are gray days If you lose half of Libya and an entire army corps into the bargain, why worry? These are just gray days. Every nation has them. If your imperial legions are hurled back in headlong flight by a tiny Greek army, what of it? Such gray days are the fortunes of war. They serve merely to exasperate the national will, making ultimate victory so much the more certain.

If your fleet is so battered it scarcely ever leaves its base and always retires hastily at the first sight of an enamy squadron, who cares? No one can hope to win all the time!

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