

Ferdie J. Deering

OCT 11 1979

More May Be Less for Rich Nation

A BUSINESSMAN who had suffered numerous setbacks while converting a struggling appliance manufacturing firm into a profitable operation recently summed up his philosophy this way:

"You don't learn anything from success!"

That statement might apply also to politics and people. Our hard-won freedoms under a constitutional government have been so successful we seem to forget how materialism destroyed other free nations.

Speakers and writers have described Communism and Socialism as political philosophies based on materialism. They seldom declare that ours is a nation with high ideals and great spiritual qualities, but that seems to be the implication.

It would be great if that were the case. Unfortunately, the United States, like other nations, seems to be drifting away from patriotism, religion, culture, manners, honesty, integrity and other elements of civilization as rapidly as wage rates go up.

Poverty is deplorable and prosperity desirable, but neither condition justifies abandonment of finer qualities of life. They are needed to endure the one and make worthwhile uses of the other.

"There is something about prosperity which brings out the worst in us," says commentator Paul Harvey.

People of this nation had a great illusion of prosperity in the "Roaring Twenties." It ended 50 years ago this month with an economic crash, unemployment and bitter poverty terminated only when World War II rekindled our patriotism and flagging spirits.

A new book by Jeremy Seabrook carries the lengthy title: "What Went Wrong? Why Hasn't Having More Made People Happier?" It deals with the materialistic tidal wave that converted England from a great empire into a mediocre have-not nation.

Questions asked by Seabrook were answered long ago by Jesus Christ, who said: "Beware and be on your

guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (Luke 12:15)

Wealth itself was not criticized, but the love of wealth above more desirable spiritual and cultural qualities was condemned.

Without wealth, this country would not have accomplished the high standard of living we enjoy. Wealthy people have made possible great religious, medical, educational and aesthetic facilities.

Ambition to achieve success is a desirable quality. Without it people are unlikely to achieve anything worthwhile, or contribute to the wellbeing of the society which supports them.

As citizens despair of politicians' failure to slow down inflation and reduce excessive government, one may wonder if another depression is the only thing that will restore a proper perspective of values.

Just having more guarantees neither happiness nor security!

OCT 18 1979

THE FEDERAL LAND BANK OF WICHITA

151 NORTH MAIN
WICHITA, KANSAS 67202



WM. S. MAY
PRESIDENT

October 17, 1979

Mr. Ferdie Deering
The Daily Oklahoman
500 N. Broadway
P. O. Box 25125
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

Dear Ferdie:

For sometime I have wanted to commend you on your excellent editorials which I read religiously in the Daily Oklahoman. The one of October 11 entitled "More May Be Less for Rich Nation" triggered my pen.

The sin of ingratitude seems to grip our nation to the extent that not only do we fail to count our blessings, but we even treat our abundance as a curse rather than the challenge and opportunity it should be. Yes, I must reluctantly agree with Paul Harvey that "prosperity brings out the worst in us."

It is difficult to appreciate adequately anything whose absence we have never experienced. I well remember when drivers of cotton wagons arrived at the gin wearing flat straw hats and silk shirts with a fine pin stripe in them. That was only a short time before "black Tuesday," October 29, 1929, 50 years ago when Wall Street collapsed. Life is richer for me because I remember those experiences and their great lessons. I can relish peace because I was in a world war and I can appreciate this time of abundance because I once endured dust bowl poverty but, like you, I am much concerned about the irresponsible overswing of our national pendulum toward social democracy. Somehow I cannot think such a continuing trend will leave intact the democracy and industriousness that built our great nation.

Keep up your editorials, Ferdie, they cause us to pause and to think.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill", is written over the typed name.

Wm. S. May
President

WSM:jr

