

D E A R F R I E N D S

Vol. 8, No. 6

3416 Calle Poco, Tucson, Arizona 85715

June 29, 1968

Greetings:

As another July 4th nears, President Johnson has signed the bill calling for a 10% surcharge on individual and corporate income taxes. It was previously passed by the House and Senate by substantial margins. It continues the excise taxes on autos and on telephone service. It will be reflected in increased withholding beginning with July 13th. The President hailed the bill saying "it honors the Democratic principle that taxes should be based on ability to pay." Nothing in the new bill moves to do anything about the huge loopholes in existing tax laws, not the least of which is the 27½% depletion allowance. If anything smacks of hypocrisy....

One of the basic rallying cries of our War of Independence was "no taxation without representation" - which makes one wonder today if we are very much better off with "taxation with poor representation". How diligently does the American Congress go to bat for the American people when it will accede to an increase in the present burden of taxes without making a like effort to reduce the inequities favoring special groups.

How many taxpayers are aware of a Federal Farm Subsidy program that pays out huge sums for not planting. The July issue of The Progressive gives some startling figures:

Three California farm complexes received \$8,259,759 last year.

The U. S. Sugar Corp. of Florida and the Hawaiian Comml. and

Sugar Co. of Hawaii received over \$1,200,000 each

Fifteen other farmers received \$500,000 or more each

Four hundred received \$100,000 or more each. Included in this

group was Senator James O. Eastland's 5235 acre Eastland

Plantations, Inc. which got \$157,930 while eight other farms

in the same Mississippi County got \$100,000- or more each.

All of these subsidies were for not planting. The legislation was supposedly created to be a form of assistance to small farmers. Senator John J. Williams of Delaware suggested that a \$10,000 ceiling be put on these payments. It would save the Treasury about \$600,000,000 a year - and if the ceiling were \$5000-, it would save an estimated \$1,000,000,000.

Senator Williams stated "It should be emphasized that these payments are not for food produced or for services rendered, rather are payments not to cultivate the land."

An amendment introduced by Rep. Paul Findley of Illinois, to set limits on these subsidies was defeated in the House by a vote of 129 to 79. This total vote is less than half the House membership. Where were the rest of the Congressmen? 418 votes were recorded when the new tax bill came up in the House. What kind of representation does the American public get from its public servants when they don't even take the trouble to vote on a matter as grievously unjustifiable as this farm subsidy appropriation. How did your Congressman vote? You might write and ask him.

The President continues with his smug, pious rhetoric. It doesn't dispel the doubts that the American people are having increasingly about this Administration. How dismal the record is will probably not be known until it has ended its term in office. That we manage to survive as a great people in spite of this is a tribute to our resiliency. If we would but match this trait with an equally high level of awareness.

-- Joseph Zashin