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1950

### Communist Party Speech on Humboldt County, Mad River Project

Communist Party

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GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The Eureka Branch of the Communist Party has come forward in this election with its own candidate and its own program. We neither support nor endorse any program or any candidate but our own. In recent election campaigns attempts have been made to confuse the voters by preying on existing prejudices against the Communist Party. This was done in the last County election in one of the Supervisorial districts. Unknown persons had printed a leaflet including a list of candidates, with a statement to the effect that these were the candidates endorsed and supported by the Communist Party. If such tactics are used in the present city elections, we ask that you do not become confused but recognize it as political trickery.

During the campaign this year we have issued a number of leaflets explaining our program and in support of our candidate. Of the issues raised in our leaflets, and which have become vital during the campaign, three stand out. First, the Mad River Project. Second, recreational centers and a swimming pool for the young. Third, the protection of labor and civil rights. Before going into an explanation of our program, I would like to speak briefly on these three issues.

The story of the Mad River Project is long and confusing. I was interested in listening to Mayor Quinn's radio broadcast Wednesday evening, most of which was devoted to the Mad River Project. Realizing that the Mayor has long been closely and intimately associated with the project, I expected that we would all be relieved of some of the confusions existing in our own minds regarding the handling of the project and the eventual high cost of the project. I must say that I was disappointed. The Mayor himself seemed to become confused over dates and figures, but the main impression of the entire talk was that the Mayor did protest too much. But to get on with the story.

I will attempt to deal only with the main points of the project, because in a radio broadcast figures become confusing. In December, 1933, the people of Eureka approved a proposition calling for the issuance and sale to the United States Government of Revenue Bonds of Eureka to the amount of \$925,000, with an expected contribution from the Government of \$209,000, making a total of \$1,134,000 for: (I quote from the ordinance) "Purchase and construction of betterments and improvements to the water system of said city, including a reservoir on Mad River, conduits therefrom and a regulating reservoir in said city....." "Pledging the revenue derived from said improvements as distinguished from the existing system to pay for the principal and interest on said bonds besides the cost of operation, maintenance and depreciation....." end quotes.

In other words, the City of Eureka was to build a dam on Mad River, a pipeline to the city, and a regulating reservoir in the city itself. The revenue from the water system was to go toward paying off the principal and interest on the bonds including maintenance. Two points now stand out. The total cost of the dam, pipeline, and reservoir was to be \$1,134,000, and secondly, the water system was to pay its own way. This bond issue was rejected by the Federal Government when the Government refused to put up the \$925,000, requesting the City of Eureka to assume the responsibility by the issuance of General Obligation bonds.

Acting on the suggestion of the Government, in August, 1934, the people of Eureka approved a proposition incurring a bonded indebtedness of \$959,000, with an expected contribution from the Federal Government of \$318,000, making a total of \$1,277,000 for: (again I quote from ordinance) "by the acquisition, construction and completion of a new water supply from Mad River.....including the construction of a concrete arch dam on Mad River, ~~of~~ a concrete lined tunnel, a five million gallon embankment type reservoir, the installation of approximately twenty-three miles

of pipe line and the acquisition of the necessary lands and rights of way for said water supply system."

In section 3 of the same ordinance the estimated cost of the entire project, including the entire cost of the dam, pipeline, and reservoir would be \$1,224,000. But the story continues. In 1937 the project was still in the process of being built, and the people were asked to vote bonds to the amount of \$625,000. Besides that, and additional \$173,000 was procured from such sources as the General Fund. On May 31, 1939 a total of \$2,075,000 had been spent on the project which is almost twice the amount of the original estimation. And the job is not yet completed--- there is still the filter system and the reservoir to be built. This is a strange manner of doing business to say the least. In amounts that we can more easily understand, we started out to build a house for \$3,000, and the builder presents us with a bill for \$5,000. On moving into our new home we discover that he has failed to put any roof on the house. Furthermore, when we complain of its condition and criticize his building and business methods he becomes excited and protests that he has worked hard on the house. Perhaps he has. But such a builder does not deserve to remain in business.

At the present time the Mayor complains of the criticisms levelled against those responsible for the condition and the cost of the project. The three councilmen, Mr. Schulze, Mr. McDade, and Mr. Larson who were in office all during this period must accept their share of responsibility. In fairness to these gentlemen, in fairness to the Mayor and in fairness to the taxpayers of the City of Eureka, we ask for a thorough public investigation of this entire project and a complete report to the people. The question has been asked: Well, what can be done about it now?

Just this. If this project has been bungled as badly as it appears, then the people of Eureka can retire from office those responsible and steps can be taken to see that such ~~steps can be taken to see that~~ mis-administration does not take place again.

The second issue that has become vital during the campaign is a recreational center and swimming pool for the young of Eureka. Why hasn't a playground and swimming pool been built in Carson's Park? The Mayor and the Council excuse themselves by stating that they have not yet had time to complete plans. They have had time enough, and the plans have not yet been announced. There is the further excuse that those living and owning property in the vicinity of Carson's Park object to playground facilities being provided because it would spoil their view and detract from the value of their property. I do not believe that the majority of the people in that vicinity have any such objections, and I do not believe that such facilities would detract from the value of the property. This is merely an excuse for not using the funds and the property already available for the building of a swimming pool. Why have the Mayor and the Council failed to act on this necessary project?

It is a sad commentary on the functioning of local government when the County Board of Supervisors find it necessary to put up a \$100,000 building, part of which is to be used as a detention home for the young. At the same time the Mayor and City Council sit stubbornly on \$50,000 and a well-located plot of ground, when with proper and business-like handling of the funds, fine equipment and facilities could be provided that would, to a great extent, keep the children of our community occupied in healthy activities, and not running around the streets getting into trouble so that they must be locked up in a detention home. We ask for immediate plans to be made to build a swimming pool and provide recreational facilities, by taking advantage of PWA and WPA grants, at little if any cost to the taxpayers. Such a swimming pool should be centrally located and made available to young and old alike.

The third vital issue that has become clear in this campaign is the protection of labor and ~~civil~~ civil rights. In the past few weeks, at least three different organizations and groups of people have been denied the use

of public buildings. Under our democratic form of government public buildings have always been available to the people for public meetings. To deny these is a serious curtailment of our civil rights.

We have seen the time in this city when the fundamental rights of union men have not been protected. Three of the present Councilmen---Mr. McDade, Mr. Schulze, and Mr. Larson were in office during this period. They cannot be expected to protect labor and civil rights.

The majority of the people in our community are progressive and are in favor of guaranteeing the fundamental rights of labor to organize into unions of their own choosing without fear or intimidation. This was proven in the last election when the people of Eureka defeated by a strong majority Initiative No. 1 and Proposition No 26. The un-organized workers in Eureka realize that if the trade union movement were broken, their wages and working conditions would be jeopardized. It is to the interest of the unorganized as well as to the organized that the fundamental rights of labor as set forth and protected by Federal Law, be guaranteed and protected. And any candidate worthy of the support of workers will pledge himself to such a guarantee and stand squarely for protection of fundamental labor and civil rights.

I would like now to speak briefly of the program on which I am running. This 5 point program is one which can be put into effect here, now, today. The first point calls for a recreational center and swimming pool for the young people. The great majority of the people in our community are in favor of having this done. The funds are available, and with the help of the Federal Government, a fine recreational center and swimming pool can be erected with little or not cost to the taxpayers.

The second point on the program calls for equitable taxation and license fees for the home owner and the small business man. Recent attempts to draft a new license ordinance by the use of WPA workers which would to a certain extent make license fees more equitable has been blocked by the

Mayor's veto. This ordinance was worked on for months, many business men were called in to give their advice on making the ordinance fair to all concerned. Every attempt was made to get the help of the Mayor in this work, but his only contribution was a veto after the measure had unanimously passed the council. An example of the inequalities under the license ordinance is that of the lumber companies, doing hundreds of thousands of dollars of business, but pay a flat license fee of \$75 per quarter. Many small business and professional men pay from \$15 to \$25 and more per quarter, while doing only a fraction of the business as compared to the lumber companies.

Many small properties are assessed at a higher valuation than for which they can be sold. Under the administration of the present Mayor and City Council, the burden is made to fall more heavily on the small business and professional men and the small home owner. The big corporations and property owners should be required to carry their share of the burden.

The third point on my program is in regard to protecting the fundamental rights of labor. I have already spoken on that. However, city employees work for as little as 50¢ per hour and city office workers for as little as \$65 per month. City employees should receive union wages for their work.

The fourth point on my program calls for general improvements for Eureka. To retire the various bond issues for the water department, and to pay the interest on those funds alone costs the city about \$115,000 per year. This does not take into account depreciation on the equipment. It is obvious that the taxpayers are due for an increase in taxation or in water rates. Any program to improve the sidewalks, streets, sewers, etc. would have to be a long range program and could be carried out most effectively by taking advantage of WPA and PWA grants for the lowest possible cost to the taxpayers.

The fifth point on my program calls for a public investigation of the

Mad River Project, and a complete report to the people of Eureka on the costs, lack of filter system, reservoir, etc. Favoritism to large corporations which are best able to pay must be stopped.

I pledge myself to work for this program if elected as councilman from the Fifth Ward. In any case this program should be put into effect. Improvements and services, however, are possible, but only through administration which is competent, which is concerned with the welfare of the City's residents, and has a real community pride. Only such an administration can BUILD A BETTER EUREKA!

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.