

FROM WHERE I SIT

By A. E. CAHLAN

Ought to be a moratorium on columns the last week before election. Editors can't help being in politics with both feet. If they were not, they wouldn't be editors. Things get plenty hot the last few days before the voting commences. And naturally, editors are right in the middle of the maelstrom. It's hard to keep your eyes on the news when you're thinking politics. And yet there are things happening every day that are perhaps even more important than who's going to occupy state and county offices for the next few years.

A couple that happened during the past week are cases in point. Take this interim power business. Nevada got what it always gets when southern California is in the picture—NOTHING. If columnists weren't always supposed to be gentlemen I might make that statement a bit stronger. But we will let it go at that. If the present contracts for interim power are approved, Nevada will get NONE of the first power generated at Boulder Dam. Los Angeles will get the jump on us in attracting industry, and we who use electricity in our homes will keep right on paying the same rate that we are now until the permanent contracts go into effect and Nevada can withdraw some of the Boulder dam energy. That will NOT be the fault of the local power company. They'll be helpless to prevent this situation and of course the big-hearted Nevada-California Power company will come along and offer us some of our own power at a profit, with a view of squeezing out the local concern with the help of the city of Los Angeles.

Of course, whether this comes to pass or not, depends largely on the weather in the Rocky Mountains. If there's plenty of snow this winter the Boulder Dam reservoir will fill rapidly and we will have little to worry about, for the interim contracts will last only two or three months. If we have a couple more years like the last one, there won't be much water running down the river and the reservoir won't fill up so fast. Then these interim power contracts will last for two or three years and we'll be holding the sack just like everybody else that gets into any proposition with the city of Los Angeles. SO—we have got a fight on our hands there.

If that isn't enough, consider the suit filed this week by the Nevada-California Power company to get a

refund on taxes paid in Clark county. The amount involved is small—only \$8,000, but there's more behind it all than just that sum of money. Six Companies will have paid in several hundred thousand dollars in taxes before leaving Clark county. And they paid it gladly just as soon as Judge Norcross decided there was no reservation down there around the dam. But the power company is fighting over \$8,000, and it's necessary to look much deeper to find the reason.

Hidden away in an inconspicuous corner of the complaint is a paragraph which challenges the Norcross decision and seeks to uphold that reservation. And indications are that this point will be carried thru to the supreme court of the United States unless the power company gets a favorable decision further down the line. And the idea is, of course, what many Las Vegans have figured from the start, that if that reservation is legally established, it is a permanent reservation with all property therein, PERMANENTLY EX-EMPT FROM TAXATION.

The power companies and the city of Los Angeles will own the power machinery that occupies Uncle Sam's power houses. They will have several power lines running in. They will have offices and homes for their employees. Then they will be sending power out from the dam. All these are subject to taxation. Without the power, there will be perhaps a million dollars or more of assessable property down there. Taxes on that property over a period of years will represent quite a sizeable sum. Perhaps \$30,000 or more per year.

If that reservation can be legally established, Clark county and the state of Nevada will get no tax money from these concerns. THAT'S what seems to be behind the Nevada-California Power company's suit, and Clark county and the state have a real battle on their hands to win. There's big money at stake, and therefore plenty of money with which to fight—on the other side.

I have wondered if both of these actions weren't timed to come during a hot political campaign in the hope their importance would be minimized in the minds of the general public here in Nevada—that because of this we might pass both by until too late. Stranger things have happened.