

A Flimsy Excuse

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Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur may be a great educator but he still has something to learn of the equities that are involved in taxation. He objects to the enactment of legislation that will permit the state of Nevada to tax the private property of the Six Companies and other owners within the reservation and defends his attitude with the explanation that the government is building school facilities there; that it polices the reservation territory, and that Six Companies, in lieu of taxation, is paying five thousand dollars monthly to the government for rentals and other federal privileges. The government, seemingly, gets this five thousand dollars.

But how about the state of Nevada and Clark county? Several thousand persons have been added to their population by the Boulder dam improvement. Many of them find work there. Many of them, also, own no property and do not live within the reservation limits, but must be given police protection, highway facilities, indigent relief and all of the other benefits that are afforded by local and state governmental agencies. Accordingly many of them make no contribution toward meeting these costs, just as many taxless persons in other communities make no such contributions, but in the latter instances their share is paid by their employers in the form of taxes from which Dr. Wilbur would relieve Six Companies.

The fact that a mining or a lumber company builds its own local roads and schools and polices its own grounds, and such things are frequently done, would be considered as a rather flimsy argument for tax exemption by any state or county. The reply would immediately be made that there are many general expenses which all property owners must bear and that exceptions cannot be made without establishing unfair discriminations. The same reply applies to the situation at Boulder dam.

The Six Companies is conducting a large business in this state. It is a fair presumption that this business is highly profitable. It receives the protection of the state's laws, moves its equipment over its highways and its employes enjoy every advantage both on and off the reservation that is enjoyed by the other citizens here. The other people of Nevada, either directly, or through those who employ them, pay for these privileges. Dr. Wilbur, however, would establish an exception in favor of the Six Companies and the reservation concessionaires merely because they are for the moment, under the protecting wing of a great federal department. Altogether his argument is one in defense of an intolerable injustice.