

FROM WHERE I SIT

By A. E. CAHLAN

RENO, Feb. 12.—A long way away, but thoughts inevitably turn toward home and the plans for the future that mean so much. Two years is a short time. It will pass magically, and we'll wonder where it went. And yet the next two years are the most important, perhaps in our entire lifetime—our whole future is tied up in the events of the next two years—whether we continue on the high road to happiness and prosperity, or drop gradually back to the mediocrity of other days, depends entirely on the effort put forth to solve the problems facing us.

For in two years the Boulder canyon project will be nearing completion—the huge payroll which has made southern Nevada one of the few white spots on the business map of the country during the past two and a half years, will be rapidly dwindling toward the modest amount required to support the government forces left behind to operate the great power plants, and Boulder City will be but a shadow of its teeming busy self of today.

What of Las Vegas? That's the most important question to be answered today, and it must be seriously considered NOW instead of two years AFTER the dam is completed. We have had a habit, in this community of ours, of letting things drift along, supremely confident that because a kindly providence provided an ideal dam site on the Colorado river 28 miles from our doorstep, close enough to a large power market to be feasible of construction, that the same kindly providence would solve all problems connected with transforming our community into a great metropolis with little or no effort on our part.

While we stand idly on street corners, or sit casually in chamber of commerce meetings and discuss the great factories, smelters and refineries that will tumble over each other to avail themselves of the cheap power soon to be available, we are emulating our own example of a few years ago when we did the same thing regarding the construction of the dam project without taking a single step to make the most of our opportunity and safe-guard our rights.

Had we been on our toes, prepared to take advantage of every angle connected with the great project, Boulder City would never have been built, we would now be collecting taxes from several million dollars valuation now encompassed in the so-called reservation, and an entirely different economic situation would now prevail in southern Nevada. All this is water over the wheels, and these statements are not offered in a spirit of bitterness or complaint. Rather they are presented in the hope that the example will NOT be emulated as we approach the

new period of transition that's just around the corner.

Las Vegas MUST begin to lay plans for building against that time when the dam project itself is completed. The greatest opportunity ever laid at the door of any community, is presented by the proximity of this dam, and the value from this standpoint has always been conclusively demonstrated. Last year in excess of 100,000 people visited the dam and LAS VEGAS, bringing over a MILLION DOLLARS in outside money into the community. It was that "payroll," added to the vast amount paid monthly to the workers on the project itself, that carried Las Vegas successfully thru one year of a depression that seriously crippled many more favorably situated communities. But despite this fact, Las Vegas continues decidedly apathetic toward any move to stimulate or promote this business. There is a general impression, decidedly erroneous, that the only persons benefitted are the service station proprietors, hotel owners and restaurant men. A "payroll" of that size spreads itself into every nook and corner of a community and every person in business in Las Vegas participated.

That "industry" has developed to date almost without effort on the part of the business interests of Las Vegas. If such a sizeable flow of tourists is attracted accidentally, what could be done thru a concerted effort, participated in by the entire community, with every resource pledged to the utmost limit, as was done in the early days of Los Angeles when a few men of vision laid the foundation for what will one day be the greatest city in the world?

The answer, of course, is that properly and enthusiastically handled, this business can be developed to a point where it EQUALS OR EXCEEDS the present Boulder dam payroll we all realize means so much. The load naturally falls on the newly installed administration of the chamber of commerce. But theirs is merely a directory function. The real work must be done by the rank and file of the community, unselfishly, with all working toward a common goal.

If there is never a factory built—never a horsepower of the dam's electrical energy used in Nevada, the tourist business alone will be sufficient to continue the growth and prosperity of southern Nevada, if properly encouraged and developed. Any other city in the country would be banging away at the job, keeping everlastingly at it, and already beginning to realize results. We appear to be too busy patting ourselves on the back for the good fortune that has already been dropped in our lap, to exploit it to the fullness thereof. We may wake up before it's too late and throw our entire energies into the balance. I hope we do.