

# LAS VEGAS AGE

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## JOBS NEEDED.

A striking development of the studies and hearings and administration is showing that, because of the attacks made investigations of the utilities of the nation under the present upon electrical companies they have been unable to proceed with their regular programs of construction.

Since 1932 the deficit in the normal volume of new construction by the utilities companies of the United States runs into billions and is now several hundred million dollars below the annual program of pre-depression years.

The electrical companies of the United States, it is declared, had they been free from threat of governmental, tax-free, treasury-financed competition, and able to proceed with normal improvements, would have provided more jobs than the WPA and the PWA combined have done with all the billions provided by the government.

We seem to be relearning, slowly to be sure, the principle which made our nation the richest and most prosperous in the world, with more jobs at better pay than ever before known in history. Which is that steady jobs at good pay are better for everybody concerned than any amount of relief out of the public treasury. And that business and industry cannot provide such jobs when constantly menaced by governmental threats.

## OBSERVATIONS

### EARLY LAS VEGAS COURTS

I met my old friend J. A. Lytle in the Federal court house the other day. Mr. Lytle had been a member of the United States District court trial jury trying a long and complicated case. So it was natural that we should comment on the changes we have seen in the courts of Las Vegas since 1905.

John asked if I remembered our first justice of the peace, Judge Ralph, who officiated in 1905. I replied that I remembered him well, and often was a spectator in his court, held under a mesquite tree near Vegas creek at first, and later in the old German Judge's blacksmith shop. In the shop the Judge brought out a chair and placed it near the forge for "the bench."

The forge smoldered and smoked a little and the smell of burnt hoofs was strong in the air. Near the forge, in front of the Judge, was the tub into which he used to plunge the hot iron for tempering

and cooling, and about the tub was a shallow puddle of water in which Mrs. Ralph's flock of ducks waddled and quacked without regard to the dignity of the court.

And there was dignity in that court, crude as were the settings. Judge Ralph had a high respect for "The Law" and a rather exalted opinion of his own power as a justice of the peace. Although he could speak English but brokenly his utterances were decisive and his opinions delivered without hesitation or embarrassment.

### A NOVEL PROCEDURE

One of the most unusual procedures ever to be carried out in a Justice Court in this region occurred during the trial of a fellow named Blackie, who was charged with entering John Wisner's restaurant, then located in a tent on the banks of Vegas creek between town and the old ranch, and stealing some butter.

Defendant was arrested by Deputy Sheriff Cook and Judge Ralph immediately selected twelve men as a jury and started the trial. After the evidence had been presented the jury, for some reason, disagreed. The judge adjourned court

until next day, when the second trial of the case was held. Our friend John Lytle was a member of this second jury.

A fellow going by the name of George DeFrance, well known about the little settlement, appeared before the court, addressed Blackie, and made some derogatory remarks Judge Ralph, in high dignity, ordered the deputy sheriff to remove the disturber and warned: "You git out of here and shtay out or I'll give ye the full extent of the LAW and then double it."

Not profiting by the warning, DeFrance again forced his way into the august presence of The Court and repeated his remarks to the cringing culprit.

Judge Ralph rose in dignified anger, declared DeFrance in contempt of court and sentenced him therefor to spend six months in the county jail at Pioche and pay a fine of \$500.

Deputy Sheriff Cook departed on the evening train on his way to the county jail taking with him the convicted Blackie and DeFrance. At Calliente, where it was necessary to get a team and wagon to proceed to Pioche, it happened that District Attorney Ben Sanders heard of the DeFrance contempt of court sentence and ordered him released.

Justice in the Las Vegas of those early months of 1905 may have been a little crude, but one monkeyed with the Court at his peril.

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