

Along The Trail

by

ken legg

Something for nothing! The wild strawberries carpeted the orchard floor reaching upward to the foot of the mountain. They were anyone's for the taking. An occasional taker had been bitten by copperhead snakes, otherwise they were free. Further up the mountain the white stems of raspberries buckled under their load of black-cap berries. Clusters of blueberries, protected by the chiggers, hung from lower shrubs upon the mountain top, and down in the canyon, along the watercourses, huge sweet blackberries flourished.

We raised our own peaches and apples, and out in the woods the cherries grew wild. Birds were no problem—other people were no problem. Only four other families lived there and there was so much fruit that the children, the women, and the bird couldn't eat or pick it all.

Every winter row upon row of half-gallon glass jars filled with fruit reposed upon my mother's cellar shelves, and every glass she could get her hands on had a red bottom of jelly and a white cap of wax to seal in the goodness. We got something without paying money. The community store was good to us. We never got snake bite because we wore shoes and were careful where we put our hands. We got something for nothing!

Today I watch citizens struggling to obtain something for nothing. A man down the street works for your government and mine. You and I work and pay our taxes and pay his salary, and pay for the car he runs. When he took his boys to the barber shop last week in the government car you and I paid his way. He got something for nothing!

Each generation thinks theirs is the worst and "things weren't done that way when I was a child." But, maybe there are some changes! Is the honesty and integrity the same as it always was? I have been gainfully employed for 25 years and have never struck a lick except for government, which means I have been a public servant all my

working life. You, the people, pay me, to serve you.

Government is costly as you well know. The thing that amazes me is how each citizen looks upon government. The usual impression I get is that there is a foreign body functioning to serve the employes, or those who are "in." I talked to a contractor the other day. His lawyer had advised him to "make the state pay" for rental of his equipment "the state has plenty of money." He didn't recognize that he and his lawyer were the state.

Robbery is punishable by imprisonment. Yet, more stealing goes on between employer and employe than was ever committed by all the robbers in prison. I get the impression that some employes think the outfit is functioning for their welfare. Postage stamps and stationery are fair game in anybody's book. Automobile trips for personal business can always be disguised as official.

What is the answer? It would cost the company just as much to police every employe. There is no point in making rules without setting up machinery for enforcement. Rules are only a hindrance to the honest man; the dishonest will ignore them anyway. The answer lies with the individual himself. A desire within himself that tells him to deplore the taking of what is not his. But isn't this hard to do when he sees "Joe doing it?"

The fruit we picked upon the hillside was community property, nature's gift to people and birds. Un-utilized it would have gone to waste. The commodities the employe leaves alone mean money in the pocket to his employer and to the stockholders. Maybe there's a difference!

FLIER IS KILLED

Alameda (AP). — Cmdr. Walter Hugh Heider Jr., 40, in command of Navy Fighter Squadron 64, was killed Wednesday when his single-seater jet fighter plane plunged into Formosa Strait. The announcement was made today at Alameda naval air station.

BUY AT HOME AND SAVE!