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From Horse and Buggy to Jumbo Jet in Sixty Years

Personal Reminiscences by a Native Californian, UCSC Chancellor McHenry



Chancellor Dean E. McHenry

Twenty million people cannot live, even in an area so large as California, without disturbing severely the natural environment. In my lifetime I have seen the changes in transportation from horse and buggy to jumbo jet. The railroad flourished, then declined to nil in passenger business. Street railways provided good service in some cities; Los Angeles had a remarkably efficient electric interurban system until about 1930.

But today the motor car and the truck dominate the transport field and many Californians see that they cannot sensibly move forty million people by automobile. Freeways, streets, and parking take a heavy toll of land, nerves, and quiet. Air pollution probably comes from automobiles more than any other single source. Motor fuel taxes provide vast sums from which the freeways and highways expand and improve and the number of cars on the road mounts to new records every year.

Education

More than anything else wrought by man, Californians have been proud of their schools and colleges. Although they are still among the best, they are slipping rather badly.

In current expenditure per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools in 1969 California ranked 21st among the states, trailing after New York, Alaska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Con-

necticut, Oregon, Wisconsin, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Iowa, Wyoming, Vermont, New Mexico, Washington.

Defeat of bond issues has left many school districts with an incapacity to provide facilities for growth. Defeat of tax overrides has left them with inadequate operating budgets.

Capital outlay for the 19 state colleges and 9 university campuses has declined to a trickle. Their operating budgets grow more austere each year.

Draft an Abomination

The draft has become an abomination. For thirty years it has rested like a yoke on the necks of generations of young men. Sometimes it seems to me a grotesque credit card, to which diplomatic failures and military ventures may be charged and the bill is paid in the lost lives and health and years by our able-bodied male youth, aged 18 to 26.

What can young people do to vent their anger and frustration? With the exception of four states we have not enfranchised those under twenty-one.

Comforts

A North Carolinian named Hinton Helper visited California in the 1850's and wrote, "... California is especially infested with vermin. Fleas, ants, and all sorts of creeping things are as ubiquitous as those that tormented Pharoah and his people, and quite as annoying. No house is free from them."

It is a far cry from the 1850's to the 1970's. The population has approximately doubled each twenty years since 1860, when it was under 400,000. In the 1880's, when my father and grandfather came to California, it passed one million. In 1910, the year I was born, there were over 2 million of us. In 1930, when I was in college, we reached over 5 million. In 1950, the census showed over 10 million; by 1960, 15 million, and in 1970 surely will be over 20 million. More than one estimate for the year 2000 is above 40 million.

California's growth has brought political power, economic strength, and more problems than you can shake a stick at.

—extracts from remarks by UC-Santa Cruz Chancellor Dean E. McHenry to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, San Francisco, May 12, 1970

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stituted to include a substantial propor-