



Willmott's and Why-Not's

BY DAVID J. WILLMOTT, Editor

School Aid

There is much in the press these days about the repeal of the Blaine Amendment. This amendment prohibits the state government from giving any aid to private schools. The legislature recognizes the financial crisis that all private schools in the state are facing and is contemplating repealing the Blaine Amendment to permit direct aid to private schools.

A friend of ours, who for many years was a member of the Riverhead school board, recognized the problems that private schools were facing, as well as the inadequacies of many of the public schools, and proposed a plan by which both private and public schools could be aided. It is his contention that the disposition of state aid should be determined by the parent rather than given directly to school districts. Parents of children would be given scrip equal in value to the state aid formula. Parents then could give the scrip to the schools they felt would best educate their children. In this way a competitive climate would be created among the schools based upon academic excellence and sound business principles. Schools would be striving for both academic performance and economy. Under the present system public schools are awarded flat grants of state aid and virtually nothing is done to encourage economy or academic excellence.

Under the proposed plan private schools would be aided by funds paid by taxpayers who choose to send their children to private schools. Under the present system parents who send their children to private school pay taxes but receive no credit. They are doubly taxed by having to pay both tuition and school taxes.

Many private schools today are at the point where they can no longer continue. Many marginal schools have already closed down. Most others will not last more than two to three years without aid. In Riverhead, alone, between the three private schools, up to 500 additional children may be added to the public school system. It is estimated that this overnight influx could increase school taxes by as much as 100% in one year. If something is not done soon this is exactly what will happen within three years.

Under the plan stated above there would be no need to repeal the Blaine Amendment. State aid would be given directly to the student - not to the private institution. The parents would be free to determine

which school they wanted their children to attend. With schools striving for academic excellence, as well as economy, under this system the child would benefit.

Isn't it about time we put our outmoded prejudices aside and gave education a hard, critical look. And Why Not?

What's Your Opinion ?

For some strange reason, the town board in Riverhead seems to be unable to interpret the mood of the people. They seem to have turned a deaf ear to the outraged cries of the people concerning what has happened, in the name of progress, on the cliffs of Long Island Sound in Northville. First, they allowed in an ugly tank farm called Northville Docks. Many suspect that this organization alone is responsible for much of the oil accumulation on the beaches. Its oil trucks are responsible for much of the wear and tear on our roads, and some of the drivers, racing to meet tight schedules, have been involved in serious accidents.

Having learned nothing from this tragic mistake the board went ahead and gave its blessing to a promoter who promised utopia - an industrial park which would willingly pay enormous taxes and provide thousands of high paying jobs. The result is one of the biggest flim-flams that has ever been put over on the town of Riverhead. There is no industrial park; just one huge sand and gravel mining operation, that is eroding the beauty of the area. There is an outside chance that this operation can be stopped if Army Corps of Engineers turns down their application for extensive jetty work. There is also a remote possibility that the State water commission will renew hearings on their extensive use of the ground water to wash the sand and gravel. If these hearings are reopened it is felt that conclusive proof will be presented that there is salt water intrusion caused by the dredging and that the water commission will be forced to deny Levon Prop-

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erties the right to pump any additional water. Such a ruling could end the threat that Levon Properties presents.

Now on top of these two phenominal goof-ups, the town board is entertaining the motion to allow an oil refinery into our midst. This would threaten all aspects of our environment. The plant would process over three and one-half million gallons of oil a day. That's right, we said 3,500,000 gallons A DAY! This would be pumped in from the sound subjecting our beach to spills. The Plant would produce sulphur. Do you know what sulphur smells like? The promoters say that they have the latest equipment to eliminate the smell, but we all know that accidents happen and equipment breaks down. The company will pump over 2000 gallons of fresh water PER MINUTE. That is the equivalent of one-seventh (1/7) of the ENTIRE COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL USE OF FRESH WATER IN SUFFOLK COUNTY. They will pump this super-heated water back into the sound which will upset the ecology and throw off the balance-of-nature. Aesthetically, the plant will have a smoke stack that is estimated to be half the height of the Pan Am building in New York City; just what we need to enhance the beauty of eastern Long Island. Maybe the promoters will allow the town board to erect a flash-

ing neon sign on top of the smokestack saying "Welcome to Riverhead, The Armpit of Long Island."

The promoters of this ghastly project are promising all kinds of good things like paying ten per cent of the town taxes and creating 250 local jobs which will pay \$12,000 and up. They claim that the plant will be an asset to the community and provide clean-up for any and all oil spills. Frankly, this publication believes little it hears from these promoters. We prefer to look at the record of other promoters who have raped the area and left a pile of broken promises. This, of course, is our own opinion.

What is your opinion? The Riverhead Town Board should know how you feel, and, as a public service, we are providing the means for you to speak out on this subject which is so vital to our future. Register your opinion below. We will tabulate the findings print the results and turn them over to the town board so they can act accordingly. Maybe they can still hear you if you yell loud enough - even through the cotton in their ears. And why not?

PLEASE SEND YOUR COMPLETED POLL TO

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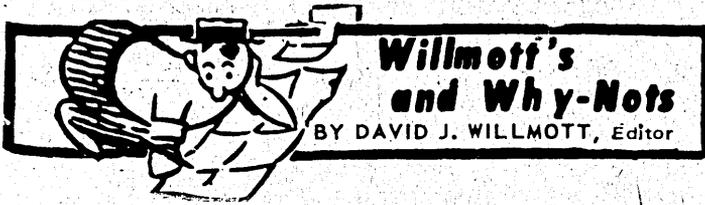
SEE PAGE 8 FOR BALLOT

from *Caressa*

Spain sends an almost all-out sling that's really cool. So cool, it was "hot" enough for them to name it BLAZE. Like the flame in flamenco? Light pink, navy, light blue, yellow, white kid; black patent. 19.99



Foot Tree



Deceit Continues

After Congressman Pike charged that the Semerjian/Levon Properties situation was cloaked in deceit and scandal we had hoped that the situation would be corrected. We hoped in vain. Another wrinkle has come to our attention.

Last week, at a hastily called board meeting of the Riverhead Chamber of Commerce, Ed Wood, President of the C of C, rammed through a resolution supporting the Levon Properties. While questioning members of the board it came to light that the resolution had not been drafted in its final form before being presented to the membership for vote. The members were under the impression that they were voting to reaffirm their original position that the property in question be used for industrial development. They were, in fact, voting on a resolution that 1. supported the Levon sand and gravel operation and 2. encouraged the Army Corps of Engineers to grant further permits to extend the jetties.

It seems incredible that these men did not know the full text of what they voted upon. They will even tell you that their endorsement of this resolution, supporting general industrial use of the property, was contingent upon the usage NOT upsetting the environment not harming the water supply. The potential effect of continued dredging upon the water supply in this area is well known to be bad.

These men knew the feelings of most members of the Chamber of Commerce and particularly of the residents of the town. We feel that they would not knowingly act in any other way but in behalf of the people, yet they unwittingly supported something that was in direct opposition to the wishes of the majority. How? Why?

Unfortunately, this is a perfect example of what has happened and probably will continue to happen as regards the Levon Properties. Subterfuge, deceit and just plain flim-flam seem to be the order of the day to make it appear that the leaders of the community AND the people are supporting Mr. Semerjian. When nothing could be further from the truth. It's enough to make you sick.

As we said two weeks ago in this column, at least this segment of the press has learned a lesson. Now, if only our leaders will learn from this recent deception that they must have all the facts, not just warm handshakes and charming smiles, before they act.

Only then will we have constructive growth. And why not?

Industrial Growth

Much has been said and written, in the past few weeks, against industry on the east end. We have devoted several editorials to the subject. Lest we are misunderstood, we would like to make our position on the subject crystal clear. We feel that industry has a place on the east end. Our balanced growth and development will depend on it.

We have often said that when we speak of industry we do not advocate the type that will give us belching smokestacks and grubby factories. We are talking about controlled industrial development including light industry, assembly plants and research and development that will blend in with our way of life and not strip our land bare or pollute our environment. We would not want industry that employs thousands of people in dull, low-paying jobs but businesses that engage local people in creative employment and sophisticated assembly work.

Business can be attracted to the area with what we have to offer. We enjoy an environment that is relatively untarnished at present. We do not have the crime and filth of the metropolitan area. Our beaches are good, our water is still pure and our air is clean. We are not overcrowded and are close to one of the world's major markets, the New York area. Our schools are excellent and our community life is good. These are the things that our type of industry looks for when considering expansion or relocation. We, and they would not want a sand and gravel operation for a neighbor.

If we permit offensive industry to gain a foothold here on the east end, we will open a Pandora's Box of problems for ourselves. Bad industry will only bring worse. We must not allow ourselves to be lured by the fast buck. We must be selective and fight for the kind of industrial development that will benefit all of us in the long run.

Industry has its place in Eastern Suffolk. Let's be selective. With what we have to offer, we can afford to be. Let's not sell ELI short. And why not?

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SUFFOLK LIFE
 GRAPHIC ARTS CENTER

EDITORIALS from page 3

Come Walk With Us

To our neighbors in Huntington Town who have been approached by Riverhead's ugly tank farmer, The Northville Dock Corp., to put another tank farm in their area, we say, "Come walk with us."

Come walk with us along our once beautiful beaches in Northville. See the dead birds. See the globs of oil and tar in the sand, on the rocks and mixed with the reeds. Look at your shoes; They are covered with tar. Gaze out in the water and see the sun glisten on the streaks of oil. Look in our closets and see our bathing suits stained with oil from last summer.

Does the oil come from Northville Dock? We can't be sure but we would hate to have anyone else make the same mistake we made. Come walk with us. And why not?

Advertising Liquor Prices

There is a bill pending before the N. Y. State Assembly which, if passed, will put the drinking population of N. Y. to great inconvenience while also making it pay more for alcoholic beverages.

The liquor store lobby has gotten past the senate a bill that will make it illegal to advertise the fact that a liquor store is having a sale. The bill makes it illegal to suggest that liquor prices have been cut. At pre-

sent, it is illegal to advertise exact price but progressive stores use the words "less than", and the consumer knows that the price is one cent less than the price noted in the advertisement.

It is urged that if stores are allowed to advertise prices, the big stores will put the small ones out of business. That is just a lot of bunk. As with all other types of business, the small coexist with the large. You don't see the giant super market putting the little "mom and pop" operation out of business or the huge discount stores putting the small independents under. What does happen is that the smaller stores have to become more competitive. They cut their prices to some extent, but the big stores have to make a profit too and use specific merchandising techniques to do so. They run specials. This does not mean that every item or brand is being sold at cost or below. What it does mean is that the smart shopper can get good buys if he hunts around both large and small stores.

Free and open competition makes for better merchandising and better value for the customer. By eliminating the free market aspect of doing business, you hurt the consumer and protect the businessman who never should have gone into the liquor business in the first place.

The public has a right to know what it must pay without having to stop at every store to determine where the best buys are. A person should be allowed to pick up his paper and see where he wants to spend his money. To deny the consumer this right is wrong.

We encourage our readers to write to Assemblyman Duryea and voice their opinions on this matter. If you care about saving entertainment dollars via the liquor route you had better write him immediately. The powerful liquor lobby has already gotten this bill past the senate. If it passes the assembly and is signed into law by the governor, then it will be to late. Write today. And why not?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

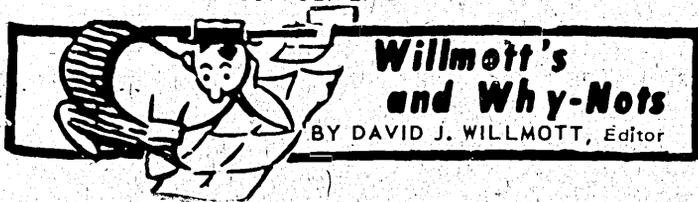
Dear Mr. Willmott,

I read with sadness and much concern your editorial "Our Biggest Asset" in the Feb. 18th issue of Suffolk Life.

We are concerned and have been trying to do something about the rape of this once beautiful land. We fought against the dredging and filling in of our marsh. We're truly made fun of. We were called bird watchers and as hard as we fought and with all the talk about Conservation, pollution, etc. one can't drive anywhere around here without seeing marshes filled.

This once gorgeous section is fast being ruined. Have you driven across the Causeway to Nassau Point recently? If so could you ever dream that a spot as beautiful as the section around the Causeway became so hideous! God help us.

One can't, in a way, blame our youth for rebelling. What



100% Increase!

Governor Rockefeller appoints members to the Public Service Commission. These appointments are choice political plums and go to the party faithful in gratitude for past favors. The Public Service Commission is supposed to protect the consumer from abuses by tolerated monopoly such as the lighting and telephone companies. As the regulatory agency, it is supposed to see to it that service is maintained to the same standards that would prevail if the companies in question had competitors to keep them on their toes. It is supposed to make sure that rates are kept to a point where free competition, if it existed, would keep them.

In the face of the worst service in our history, this politically appointed body has granted the telephone company some rate increases amounting to over 100% per month. Not only has the commission flatly granted this arrogant monopoly these exorbitant increases but also it has done absolutely nothing, to correct the discriminatory and arbitrary "calling area" situation.

Of particular concern to residents of this area is what the telephone company now calls "special detailed billing." This, if you recall, was what the telephone company used to include in all of your bills. With the blessing of Rockefeller's Public Service Commission the telephone company has been permitted to discontinue this practice. This allows them to bill you whatever they please without having to give you proof of your calls. In other words, we are at their mercy; with their deteriorating service it is impossible to tell how much they have stolen from consumers over the past four years.

At the time the phone company was given permission to bill in this manner, it ballyhooed the fact, it was going to pass along its savings in billing procedures to the consumer. We were supposed to get about a 5% reduction in rates. Of course, these savings were never realized as people could not keep track of their calls, and we ended up with higher bills. Now, the telephone company has to give you itemized statements if you request them. The only hooker is that it will cost you 120% more; yes, over twice as much as it used to cost to get the same billing. How do you like them apples?

We can't see how the Public Service Commission protects the public. It appears that it belongs, body and soul, to the telephone company. It is not acting in our behalf. It has allowed service to become intolerable while permitting rate increases.

We urge you to contact Assemblyman Duryea,

Assemblyman Costigan, Senator Guiffreda and Gov-Rockefeller in Albany, N.Y. Tell them you don't intend to tolerate the abuses that have been perpetrated upon us by the Public Service Commission and the Telephone company.

If we don't get action from these men we will have the opportunity of replacing them this Fall. Perhaps we need a new governor who will appoint a commission that will be more interested in our welfare - not the welfare of the utilities which the commission is supposed to protect us against. And why not?

Over 98% Against!

In case the board of Riverhead has any questions about how the public feels about Fuel Desulphurization, Inc., we are happy to enlighten them. In a survey conducted as a public service by Suffolk Life, which was sent to virtually every resident east of Route 112, .9832% of the public is dead set against Fuel Desulphurization locating in Riverhead. .0118% are in favor and .0050% still want more information. Ballots from Riverhead residents show that .9807% are against; .0144% are in favor and .0048% are undecided. The results of this survey, individually signed, have been turned over to the board for their inspection.

The prevailing feeling is "it stinks" and we don't want a thing to do with it. Now that the people have spoken loud and clear we expect the town board to act as elected representatives are supposed to act and see that the Fuel Desulphurization situation is ended forthwith. The board has only to say that such a plant does not fit in with Riverhead's master plan and that they will not down-zone the property.

This should not be too hard for our good, conscientious, honest public servants to do. Dare they do otherwise? We expect it to be done at the next board meeting. If they don't we will join the thousands of others who will wonder WHY. And why not?



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