

The Word's Eye View

The Word's Eye View is a newspaper column written by
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Town Halls, Now and Then (Article 60)

Town hall meetings have been woven into the fabric of American government from the genesis of our national existence. This form of expression is presently enjoying a renaissance that has been a burr under the saddle of the Democratic Party. The horse of the American people is turning some uncomfortable crow hopping into full blown rodeo bucking. The general appearance for the cause of the unsettled remuda is not just concern over the proposed health care legislation but a growing disapproval for the accumulated spending in Washington. The lightning has advanced toward the corral, frightening the herd into a potential stampede with the majority of Congress retreating from the ranch and refusing to host any town hall meetings. These rhinestone cowboys should be demoted to stall cleaners when they reject the bunch that brought them to the dance in the first place.

John Fiske wrote in his excellent book, "Civil Government in the United States -1890"--- "Within its proper sphere, government by town meetings is the form of government most effectively under watch and control. Everything is done in the full daylight of publicity. The specific objects for which public money is to be appropriated are discussed in the presence of everybody, and anyone who disapproves of any of these objects, or by the way in which it is proposed to obtain it, has an opportunity to declare his opinions. Under this form of government people are not so liable to bewildering delusions as under other forms. I refer especially to the delusion that 'the government' is a sort of mysterious power, possessed of a magic inexhaustible fund of wealth, and able to do all manner of things for the benefit of 'the People.' Some such notion as this, more often implied than expressed, is very common, and it is inexpressibly dear to demagogues. It is the prolific root from which springs that luxuriant crop of humbug upon which political tricksters thrive as pigs fatten upon corn. In point of fact, no such government, armed with a magic fund of its own has ever existed upon the earth. No government has ever yet used any money for public purposes which it did not first take from its own people." Yes, this was written in 1890, not 1990. Talk about prophetic insight, or is it rather a case of "some things never change?" No wonder our forefathers so frequently warned of the necessity of diligence.

The span when town meetings were most important from the wide scope of their transactions was the period of earnest and sometimes stormy discussions that ushered in our Revolutionary War. During 1774-75 town meetings reached a zenith of interest and participation. Newspapers were laden with political appeals and the proceedings of public bodies, encouraging unanimity and resolution. The point of the spear, primarily the Stamp Act and the Tea Act, had prodded the populous into a solid phalanx opposing these regulating acts. King-appointed governors were ordered to execute whatever means necessary to prohibit or disband these most basic forms of government. Town meetings, however, continued on in spite of the opposition, and delegates were chosen for county conventions. These assemblies served as the fuel for a critical document known as "The Declaration of Independence."

History has an interesting way of often traveling full circle. Once again, a British surgery (health care system) is being forced on an American body that is resisting the tracheotomy in preference of maintaining a voice. The doctors of deception are madly working in the laboratory to quiet the

protestors who are determined to bring to light all of the possible side effects of the prescriptions of the past six months.

Again, some things remain the same---Samuel Adams in a letter to Arthur Lee (1773) wrote, "Every art and every instrument was made use of to prevent the meetings of the towns in the country, but to no purpose. It is no wonder that a measure calculated to promote a correspondence and free communication among the people should awaken their apprehensions; for they well knew it must detect their falsehood..."

Mr. Obama campaigned with the promise of transparency that we have yet to see. Why wouldn't he urge all of his fellow Democrats to host many town halls and field the tough questions that deserve answers. Could it be there are some falsehoods that may be uncovered if too much illumination advances through the cracks in the roof? Once again, the Bible comes to the rescue when it says, "What communication hath light with darkness?" One Democratic senator said it would take an entire group of lawyers to decipher all 1018 pages of H.C. Bill 3200. Clearly, the thing is designed to be in the dark. Mr. President, tell those unseen, unknown surrogates to reduce it to ten pages in newspaper language and retrieve it from inky shadows. Why would you ask our representatives to vote on a stimulus bill when not one of them even had time to read it? Honest people crave light with the understanding that the cockroaches come out at night.

The first thing God created was light (Genesis 1:3-5) with the anticipation that all of His future acts of creation would be accomplished in the fullness of His light. He had no hidden agenda but rather a desire for mankind to know the difference between good and evil. One lone candle in a football stadium makes little difference, but 60,000 radiating cannot be suppressed. May the town halls continue!!