

HB

240

#3

ALASKA
GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP
CORPORATION

Sponsor Substitute for House Bill No. 240
Sponsor Substitute for Senate Bill No. 170

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BILL SUMMARY:	State Legislation
SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE:	AGSOC Legislation

HOW IT WORKS

THE ALASKA GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION

- * A corporation is formed and each resident of Alaska is issued one share of stock.
- * The corporation borrows money to invest in profitable projects, having assured itself of the investment's soundness.
- * Private lenders will be willing to provide loans because they can be secured by the assets of AGSOC and, if necessary subject to legislative approval, by a state guarantee.
- * The loan proceeds will be invested in the project or projects, making AGSOC an owner and thus making each Alaskan (as a shareholder of AGSOC) an owner.
- * Earnings from the project will be used to pay off the loan.
- * Dividend payments can be made to AGSOC shareholders as soon as profits are made. Once the loan is paid off, all profits from the corporation's investments will be paid out to the shareholders.

EXPLANATION: FEDERAL GSOC PROVISIONS

Federal law provides income tax advantages to certain broadly owned corporations. These companies, known as General Stock Ownership Corporations (GSOCs), are exempt from corporate income tax. GSOCs are privately owned corporations designed to leverage the typical citizen into capital ownership. As such the stock is to be distributed free of charge and investments purchase entirely through borrowed funds. As the loans are paid down from investment earnings equity is built into the shareholders.

Charter Provisions

To qualify as a GSOC a corporation must be specially chartered by a state and have a single class of stock distributed to each qualified state resident. Transfers of stock must be limited to the earliest of five years from issue or the shareholder's death or emigration from the state. No shareholder may own or acquire more than 10 shares.

GSOC Taxation

The GSOC is exempt from corporate income taxes, but its shareholders must report their share of GSOC income personally. GSOC income is computed like that of other corporations with special treatment for tax credits. Audit adjustments are included in income of the corporation for the year during which they are finally determined. Net losses are subject to a 10 year carryover and investment credit and recapture is prorated to the shareholders.

Shareholder Taxation

GSOC shareholders are taxed on their share of GSOC income. If a shareholder disposes of his stock GSOC income will be prorated on a daily basis. The shareholder's stock basis will be increased by GSOC income attributed to him and reduced by cash distributions. Since GSOC shareholders are attributed GSOC income distributions from the GSOC are generally tax free. Distributions greater than attributed income are nontaxable to the extent of the shareholder's basis and the excess taxed as capital gains. To assure shareholders have cash for taxes on their share of GSOC income GSOCs must distribute 90% of taxable income by January 31. Noncompliance will subject the GSOC to a 20% tax on the distribution deficiency. To assure payment of taxes the GSOC must withhold 25% of each distribution. The amount withheld is a credit against shareholder income taxes. Individuals not required to pay taxes (because of insufficient income) may avoid withholding on GSOC distributions.

**STATE
GUARANTY**



**Private
Lenders**



LOAN



CORPORATION

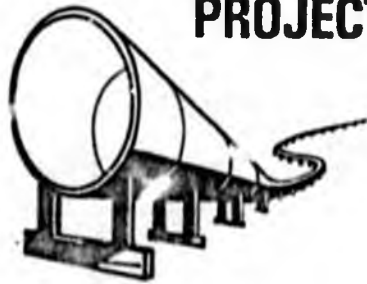


ALASKA CITIZENS

BENEFICIARIES



**ENERGY
PROJECT**



TAX TREATMENT OF GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATIONS

THERE HAS BEEN CONFUSION OVER THE EXTENT TO WHICH GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATIONS RECEIVE SPECIAL TAX TREATMENT. IN A GSOC THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX IS ELIMINATED AND THE INCOME OF THE CORPORATION IS TAXED DIRECTLY TO THE SHAREHOLDERS AT THEIR OWN PERSONAL RATES.

SIMILAR TAX TREATMENT HAS APPLIED TO SMALL CORPORATIONS FOR MANY YEARS. A CORPORATION WITH 10 OR FEWER SHAREHOLDERS MAY ELECT TO BE TREATED AS A "SUBCHAPTER S" CORPORATION. IT IS THEN EXEMPT FROM THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX AND THE CORPORATION'S INCOME IS TAXED TO THE SHAREHOLDERS IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER AS IN A GSOC. IN FACT, THE PROVISIONS OF INTERNAL REVENUE CODE "SUBCHAPTER S" WERE USED AS A MODEL IN DRAFTING THE GSOC TAX LAW.

THUS, THE GSOC TAX BENEFITS ARE NEW AS APPLIED TO CORPORATIONS WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF SHAREHOLDERS, BUT SIMILAR PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN IN EFFECT WITH RESPECT TO SMALL CORPORATIONS FOR SOME TIME.

TWO IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT THE ALASKA GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION

1. THE AGSOC IS NOT A "GIVEAWAY".

AGSOC stock would be issued to all citizens of Alaska. No cash investment is required of the shareholder because the AGSOC would borrow the funds necessary for profitable investments. The loan could be secured by the AGSOC assets and a state guarantee. As the loan is repaid the citizens' AGSOC equity increases.

This type of financing is not unique. The wealthy often borrow money on a nonrecourse basis for investment in profitable enterprises. They use their profits to repay the loans leaving themselves with an increased net worth. The AGSOC simply allows the rest of our citizens access to this type of financing.

2. AGSOC IS NOT STATE OWNERSHIP.

The stock of AGSOC will be held by the citizens of Alaska. They will vote this stock for a board of directors responsible for running the AGSOC in a profitable manner. AGSOC will be run in the same way as a typical business corporation. The only role for the State in AGSOC will be chartering the corporation and, if necessary, subject to legislative review, guaranteeing loans to the AGSOC.

In Alaska AGSOC may be an alternative to what would otherwise be State ownership of equity interests in some of Alaska's major energy projects. It was out of concern for this possibility that AGSOC was born.

ALASKA
GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION

BILL SUMMARY

Federal law requires state authorization of general stock ownership corporations receiving special tax treatment under Subchapter "U" of the Internal Revenue Code. The bill creates the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation (AGSOC). This corporation is a completely private for profit corporation which will operate under the Alaska Business Corporations Act to the extent consistent with the AGSOC act. The shares of the AGSOC will be owned and voted by the citizens of Alaska with each resident holding a share of stock.

The bill directs the Governor to appoint incorporators to form the AGSOC and sets forth the following:

- 1) Board membership limitations assuring Alaskan control;
- 2) Federal requirements for corporate articles;
- 3) Stock distribution to all Alaska residents.
- 4) Penalties for fraudulent acquisition of AGSOC stock;
- 5) One year statute of limitations on AGSOC challenges;
- 6) Financing for AGSOC startup costs; and,
- 7) Technical amendments required to Alaska statutes.

The corporation is designed to have as its shareholders existing Alaskan residents. Stock will be distributed to eligible individuals without cost. Investments by the AGSOC will be made through the use of borrowed funds and the earnings from those investments used to retire the loan and distribute dividends to the shareholders. Except for minor exemptions the AGSOC will be subject to the same rules as all other Alaska corporations.

DETAILED EXPLANATION

The bill creates a new Chapter 50, entitled "Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation", within Title 10, the Corporations and Associations title, of Alaska Statutes. The act contains nine sections which may be summarized as follows:

Section 1 sets forth those areas where the AGSOC differs from a typical Alaska business corporation organized under Chapter 5 of Title 10. To the extent that these provisions do not conflict with the provisions of Chapter 5, the Alaska Business Corporations Act, Chapter 5 will apply;

Section 2 includes the corporation among those organizations eligible to receive secured loans from the Permanent Fund;

Section 3 allows the investment of surplus state funds in bonds of the AGSOC;

Section 4 exempts the AGSOC from registration under the Alaska securities laws while providing protection from fraud.

Section 5 creates a one year statute of limitations on suits brought to challenge legality of the AGSOC;

Section 6 makes the provisions regarding eligibility for stock ownership "nonseverable" in order to assure that if this fundamental section is found unconstitutional the entire law will be voided;

Section 7 makes fraud or misrepresentation in obtaining or selling shares of the AGSOC a Class C felony; and,

Sections 8 and 9 provide effective dates immediately following the Governor's signature for most of the legislation.

ANALYSIS: SECTION 1

Section 1 of the bill constitutes the primary legislative section. It creates a new chapter, Chapter 50, of the Alaska Statutes, Title 10, setting forth technical requirements for the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation. The Chapter is divided into nine sections dealing with creation of the AGSOC, federally required charter limitations, board of directors, notification of shareholders' eligibility, limitations on corporate liability, restrictions on application for shares, fraud penalties, corporate dividends and definitions. A section by section analysis of Chapter 50 follows.

50.010. ALASKA GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION CREATED.

This section directs the Governor to appoint nine people as the incorporators and initial board members of the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation. These nine people, a majority of whom must be Alaskans, will adopt corporate articles and by-laws and file with the state to create the corporation as required under the Alaska Business Corporations Act. The bill allows the appointment of some non-Alaskan directors to provide flexibility in obtaining special expertise.

The status of the general stock ownership corporation is made clear by this section. AGSOC is not and may not be considered to be an agency, instrumentality or political subdivision of the State of Alaska. This parallels the federal statute which provides that a GSOC shall be treated as a private corporation and not as a governmental unit. The section also clarifies AGSOC status in relation to other statutes by requiring that it comply with the provisions of Subchapter U of the Internal Revenue Code and the Alaska Business Corporations Act. To the extent that the AGSOC authorizing legislation is not inconsistent with Chapter 5 of Alaska Statutes Title 10, AGSOC will be subject to all the rules applicable to any other Alaska business corporation.

50.020. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION.

Federal law requires certain charter provisions for general stock ownership corporations and these are set out as requirements for the articles of incorporation of the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation. Each of the subsections in .020 set forth a different requirement which must be included in the AGSOC articles.

Subsection 1 provides that the AGSOC may issue only one class of stock which impliedly must be voting common stock.

Subsection 2 provides that stock may be issued only to a certain class of individuals. The group to whom stock may be issued, a closed class of original issue shareholders, are those people who fulfill two tests:

- a) They were residents of Alaska, as defined by the definition Section .900, as of the effective date of the legislation which, under Section 8 of the bill, will be the day following the Governor's signing; and,
- b) They remain residents of Alaska until the shares are issued.

50.900 defines resident as a person who lives in Alaska and intends to remain here permanently. The definition allows for temporary travel or employment outside without loss of residency. If a dispute arises over residency all of the facts and circumstances indicative of permanent residency must be considered.

Subsection 3 provides that at least one share of stock must be issued to each eligible resident unless that person elects within one year not to receive the stock. The legislation contemplates issuance of shares to eligible individuals free of charge with corporate investments financed entirely with borrowed fund. The one year period allows shareholders who do not wish to receive stock for whatever reason to reject their share, but this election not to receive stock is irrevocable and once made may not be changed.

Subsection 4 provides for limitations on the transferrability of the stock so that shares may not be sold or used as security for a loan during the first five years unless the shareholder dies or moves out of the state. Shares may only be transferred to another Alaska resident and then only if that person would not own more than ten shares of AGSOC stock after the transfer. Corporations and other artificial persons may not be shareholders. Finally, in order to protect minors, shares may not be transferred until the shareholder reaches 18.

Subsection 5 provides that the corporation shall qualify as a general stock ownership corporation subject to the special tax provisions of Subchapter U of the Internal Revenue Code.

Subsection 6 provides for a limitation on investments which the corporation may purchase. The corporation may not invest in assets acquired by it or for its benefit through the power of eminent domain. This is not to imply that the AGSOC has the power of condemnation since that power may be exercised only by the government. The limitation is designed to prevent the AGSOC from acting in collusion with an agency or local government to acquire a going business from an unwilling seller. It is not intended to prevent the purchase at arm's length of a business where a portion of the seller's assets may have been acquired by condemnation. The AGSOC would not be prevented from investing in a project where some minor portion of the assets must be acquired through eminent domain if the State or local government determines that the exercise of its condemnation power is appropriate. Such a situation might occur should the AGSOC become involved in the construction of a major pipeline.

Subsection 7 provides the AGSOC with a right of first option to purchase, at a price not less than book value, any stock offered for sale during the first five years of the corporation. The terms and conditions for exercise of this right will be set forth in detail in the corporate bylaws and a notice of the restriction will appear on the stock certificates or receipts.

The five year period for the right of first option parallels the time during which shareholders are prohibited from selling their stock. Only a limited number of shares will become available for sale during this period of time and it is unlikely that an organized market for AGSOC stock will develop during this period. Discretion is left with the corporation to pay prices higher than book value for the stock, but it is likely that the directors will determine that book value is the appropriate price.

Since shareholders who become non-residents during the five year period of transfer restrictions may be able to sell their stock at a high price in an uncontrolled market emigration might be encouraged. The option by the corporation provides a controlled market during the transfer restriction period and allows time to structure the full public market which will develop after the transfer restrictions lapse.

50.030. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

This section sets out the provisions for AGSOC directors which differ from those applicable under Alaska Statutes Title 10, Chapter 5. The nine incorporators serve as the original board of directors and are divided into three groups in accordance with AS 10.05.186, except that only one-third of the directors will stand for election at the first annual meeting, one-third at the second annual meeting and one-third at the third annual meeting. Thereafter each director will serve for a term of three years as provided in AS 10.05.186. None of the other provisions of the Alaska Business Corporations Act regarding directors are changed and the normal rules of Chapter 5 apply to the AGSOC.

50.040. NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBLE SHAREHOLDERS.

Since stock is to be distributed free of charge all Alaska residents must be notified of its availability. This section sets out the minimum notice requirements of weekly broadcast and publication for at least three months before stock distribution and monthly broadcast and publication for eleven months after distribution. These are minimum requirements only and the board of directors may determine that the corporation should take other steps to identify and notify potential shareholders. The AGSOC might want to compile mailing lists from various sources to develop a list of potential shareholders while in the bush it might be appropriate for it to hire census personnel to locate and identify eligible Alaskans.

50.050. CORPORATION NOT LIABLE TO SHAREHOLDERS.

This section makes it clear that although the AGSOC is required to take reasonable steps to notify potential shareholders of their right to stock the burden of applying for stock lies with the resident and the corporation is not liable for failure to notify or issue stock to a potential shareholder. If a resident makes application for stock after the distribution of one or more dividends he loses his right to those dividends and is entitled to receive only those dividends declared and paid after the date upon which his stock was issued to him.

50.060. LATE APPLICATION FOR SHARES.

The legislation provides that stock is to be issued to all qualifying residents and the corporation directed to use reasonable efforts to identify potential shareholders. The burden of application is upon the resident. Those residents who are identified or who identify themselves will have one year in which to elect not to receive stock. To protect against those eligible residents who are not identified and fail to identify themselves hoping to see how the corporation fares before applying for their stock, a final cutoff date is provided after which distributions of stock will be made only upon payment to the corporation of book value.

50.070. PENALTIES FOR MISREPRESENTATION OF ELIGIBILITY AS SHAREHOLDER.

This section provides a civil right of action against individuals who obtain stock through fraud or misrepresentation and who sell stock on the same basis. It allows the stock to be voided, dividends to be recovered with interest and costs of the suit to be paid by the defendant.

50.080. DIVIDENDS OF THE CORPORATION.

Under the rules of the Alaska Business Corporations Act a corporation may pay dividends only out of earned surplus, the retained earnings of the corporation. Since the AGSOC is required by federal law to distribute 90% of its taxable income to its shareholders on an annual basis it may be necessary to distribute a dividend in excess of earned surplus. Such a situation can arise because accounting for tax purposes and for purposes of the corporation's books may not and are not required to be the same. For this reason an exception to the general rule of Chapter 5, Title 10, is required allowing the AGSOC to distribute dividends as required to meet the terms of Internal Revenue Code Subchapter U except where such distribution would cause the corporation to become bankrupt or when the corporation is already bankrupt. Bankruptcy in this situation means when the corporation is unable to meet its current obligations.

50.090. EXEMPTION FROM AS 10.05

This section exempts the AGSOC from the provisions of the Alaska Business Corporations Act which requires \$1,000 of paid in capital before operation of the corporation commences.

50.100. LOAN GUARANTEE FUND.

This section establishes a fund within the Department of Revenue which is to be used to guarantee loans to the AGSOC by private lenders. This fund is intended to provide security for private credit to be used by the AGSOC for its startup expenses such as the costs of stock issue and the investigation of potential investments.

50.900. DEFINITIONS.

This section defines the terms used in Chapter 50. Especially important is the definition of resident since that definition will determine who is eligible to receive AGSOC stock without charge.

Two-Factor Theory And ESOP Financing

Why, In An Advanced Industrial Economy,
Substantial Income-Producing Capital
Must Be Owned By Corporate Employees

And

How--With Very Slight Changes In Basic
Business Strategy--This Can Be
Effectively Accomplished Through Employee
Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Financing:

- °The Most Potent Instrument For The Purpose
- °The Most Advantageous To The Corporation
- °The Most Beneficial To Employees

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Although two-factor economics is a new and fundamental concept, it is simple and straightforward. The reasoning runs as follows:

1. While it is true that people, participating in the economy through the performance of their various tasks, are a basic source of productive input, they are not the only source of productive input.
2. Non-human things, such as land, structures and machines, also make productive input into the economy.
3. The division of the input sources into two types is both necessary and adequate, because the ownership of labor power cannot be concentrated, while the ownership of non-human things can easily be concentrated. It is, after all, an individual's property in an input factor that entitles him to receive what it produces.
4. Under the logic and morality of a market economy, productive input into the economy is the basis for the individual's right to receive income from it. Economic outtake is conditioned on economic input. To accountants and businessmen, this relationship is simply double-entry bookkeeping. To economists, it is "Say's Law" or "Say's Identity". To moralists, it is the Puritan Ethic, or simply the principle of economic justice defined by Aristotle. To lawyers, it is the principle of private property, under which the owners of capital and the individual owners of labor power are accorded the income equivalent of what each privately-owned input factor contributed to production.

Figure 1: **SAY'S LAW THE BASIC LAW OF TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS**

For every dollar spent, somebody gets a dollar in economic value. Say's Law is simply a prose statement of the principle of double-entry bookkeeping, which is the logic of a private property, market economy.

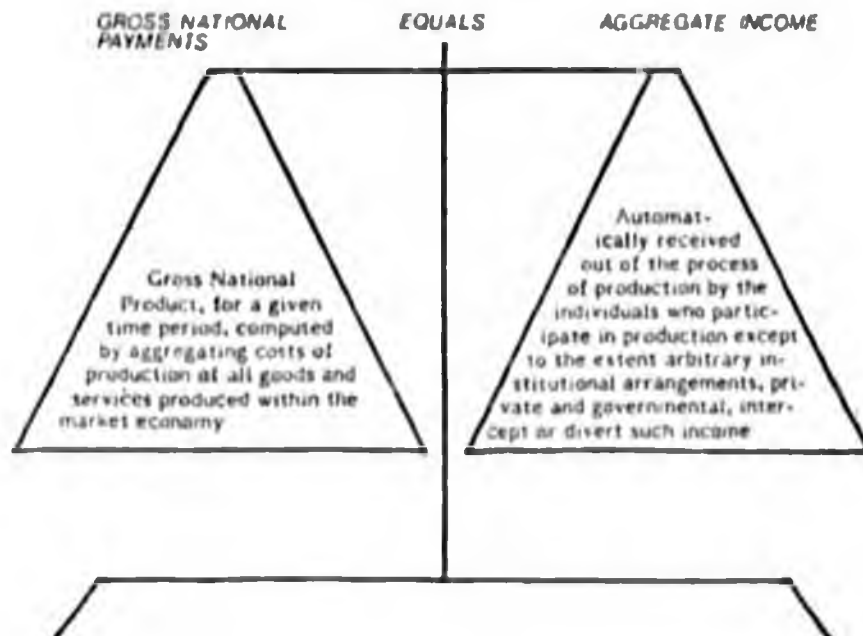
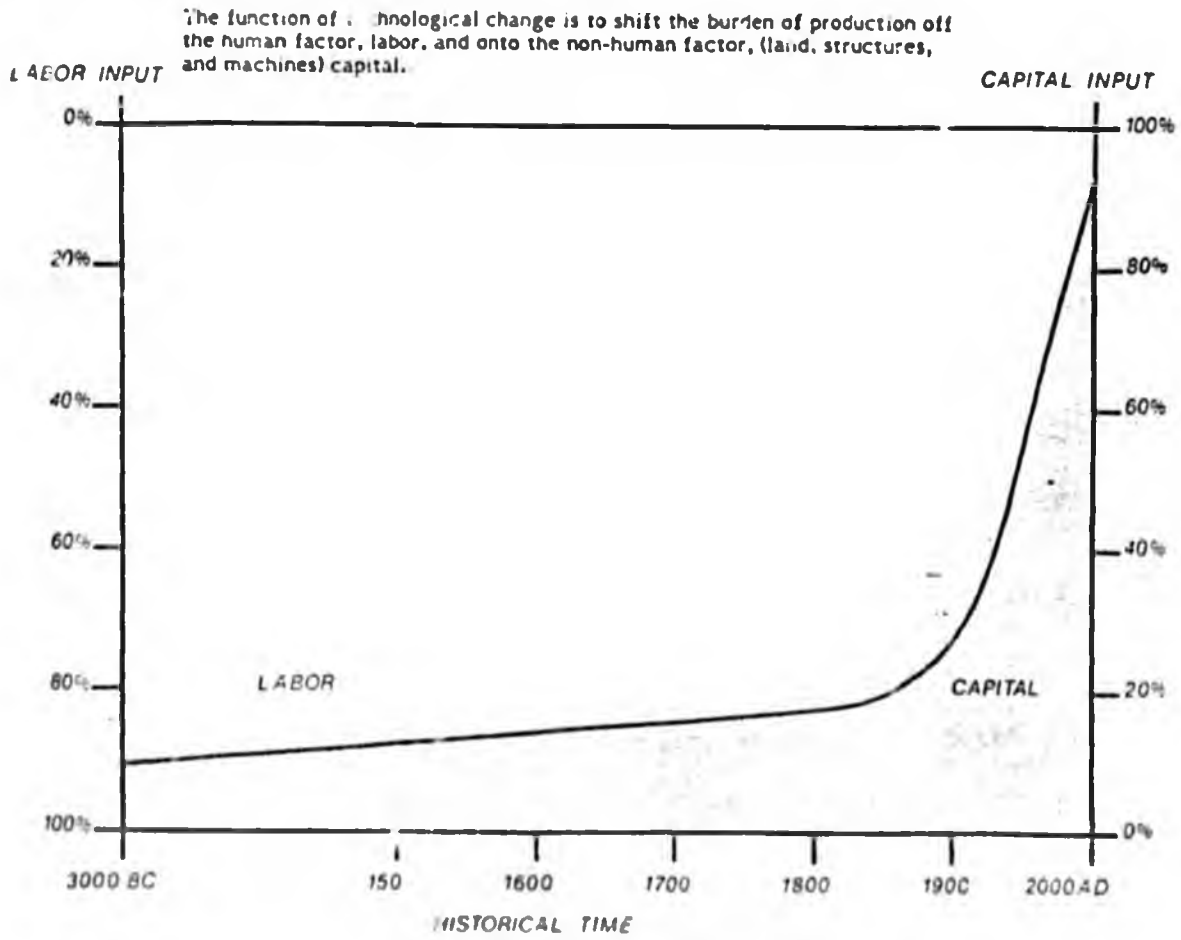


Figure 2: SAYS LAW ILLUSTRATED ON THE BASIS OF 1973 STATISTICS (IN BILLIONS)

<u>Gross National Product</u>		<u>Pre-tax Income</u>	
Less adjustments for capital consumption allowances, indirect business tax and non-tax liability, business transfer payments and other minor adjustments.		Pre-tax Income Automatically Arising out of Production and Received by the Participants in Production	
CONSUMER COSTS OF:		INCOME OF PARTICIPANTS IN:	
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	\$ 37.8	Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	\$ 37.8
Mining	9.7	Mining	9.7
Contract construction	57.5	Contract construction	57.5
Manufacturing	291.9	Manufacturing	291.9
Transportation	39.3	Transportation	39.3
Communications	21.7	Communications	21.7
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	19.8	Electric, gas, and sanitary services	19.8
Wholesale and retail trade	151.5	Wholesale and retail trade	151.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate Services	118.9	Finance, insurance, and real estate Services	118.9
Government and government enterprises	133.6	Government and government enterprises	133.6
Foreign trade and transactions	162.9	Foreign trade and transactions	162.9
	<u>9.6</u>		<u>9.6</u>
	\$1,054.3		\$1,054.3

5. Technological advance, which is the phenomenon responsible for the Industrial Revolution, as well as our own automation revolution, and all of the intermediate revolutions brought about by science and technology, changes, and is intended to change, the input mix. It shifts the burden of production off labor (the human factor) and onto capital (the non-human factor). Technological change does not operate directly on labor. It cannot increase the productiveness of an individual worker. It increases the productiveness of machines, tools, structures, land and processes. The economic productiveness of human workers--what they can accomplish with their unaided muscles or minds has not changed during the course of history, if the value of that productiveness is determined objectively and competitively by the free operation of the law of supply and demand.

Figure 3: THE FUNCTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE



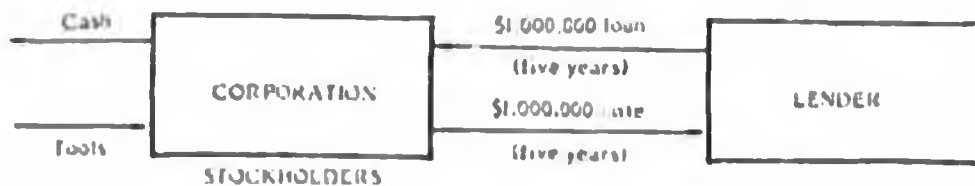
6. In the United States economy, the world's most advanced, the process of technological change has gone so far that most of the goods and services today are produced by capital instruments; only a minor portion of the productive input is made by people. With rare exceptions, it is capital that produces affluence. Labor, in a free labor market, can normally produce only subsistence. The relative distribution of aggregate personal income between workers (roughly 3/4ths) and the owners of capital (1/4th) does not reflect the relatively higher productive input by capital because our governmental economic policy (the Employment Act of 1946), and implementing legislation, attempts to repeal the law of supply and demand as it applies to the value of labor. This is the purpose of minimum wage laws, coercive fixing of wages, vast governmental make-work programs, government subsidies to industry and other government entities to "create" jobs, etc.

The costs of all such efforts enter into the costs of production, directly or indirectly, and thus are inflationary precisely because they are not reflected in the increased production of goods and services by labor. Such costs, neither representing increased labor input nor labor shortages, are, in fact, disguised welfare. They are injected into the costs of the same quantities of goods and services that, prior to the coerces increases, would have been produced at lower costs. These attempts to overvalue labor constitute the monetization of welfare.

7. The shifting of the input mix from labor to capital would cause no economic problem, even under competitive labor markets, if the declining productiveness of labor were offset by increasing capital ownership, i.e., if, as technology diminished the productive role of the human factor, workers simultaneously acquired ownership of enough productive capital to compensate for their loss, or even better, enough capital to provide what few labor-dependent persons have ever achieved, a truly affluent standard of living.
8. Unfortunately, traditional techniques of finance do exactly the reverse of what the situation logically requires. They insure that all newly-formed capital will be automatically owned by those who own all existing capital. Under these techniques, the \$100 billion-plus of new capital formation that comes into existence each year in the U.S. economy becomes owned by a tiny proprietary class--5% of consumer units at most. If averaged over the past 15 years, about 98% of new capital formation in the corporate sector (which produces more than 85% of total private sector goods and services) is financed out of direct cash flow or borrowings repaid out of cash flow.

Figure 4: CONVENTIONAL CORPORATE FINANCE

Including internal cash flow, borrowings repaid from after-tax cash flow, accelerated depreciation, depletion, and investment tax credit, but excluding sale of new stock to the public for cash

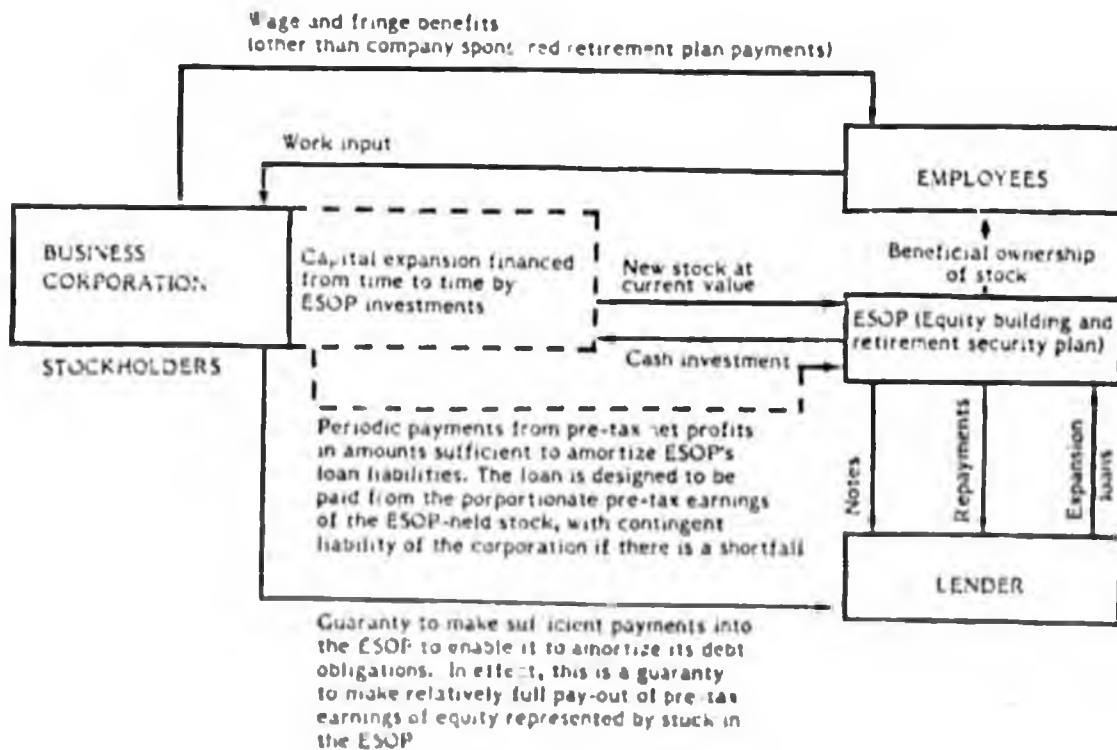


These methods of financing new capital formation have one common characteristic: they do not create a single new stockholder. The portion of new capital formation (about 2%) financed by sale of equity stock to the public does not alter this propensity. Every qualitative study of stock ownership to date shows that ownership of virtually all individually-owned productive capital is lodged in the top 5% of consumer units. These are the families who have excess funds to buy newly-issued stock. Conventional finance has created this monopoly.

9. The logic of business finance is to invest in productive capital that will pay for itself within a reasonably short space of time, normally three to five years, and then go on throwing off wealth indefinitely, its productive power being replenished through depreciation funds set aside out of gross income before net income is computed. Two-factor financing techniques, of which the most widely used today is the Employee Stock Ownership Plan or ESOP, makes this logic available to employees.

Figure 5: BUSINESS CORPORATION FINANCED BY A PROPERLY DESIGNED ESOP

Intended to simultaneously (1) finance growth of the corporation, and provide second incomes for the employees (if the stock is dividend paying and, after shares are paid for, the dividends pass through the ESOP currently to the employees) and (2) to build retirement security in the form of equity capital ownership.

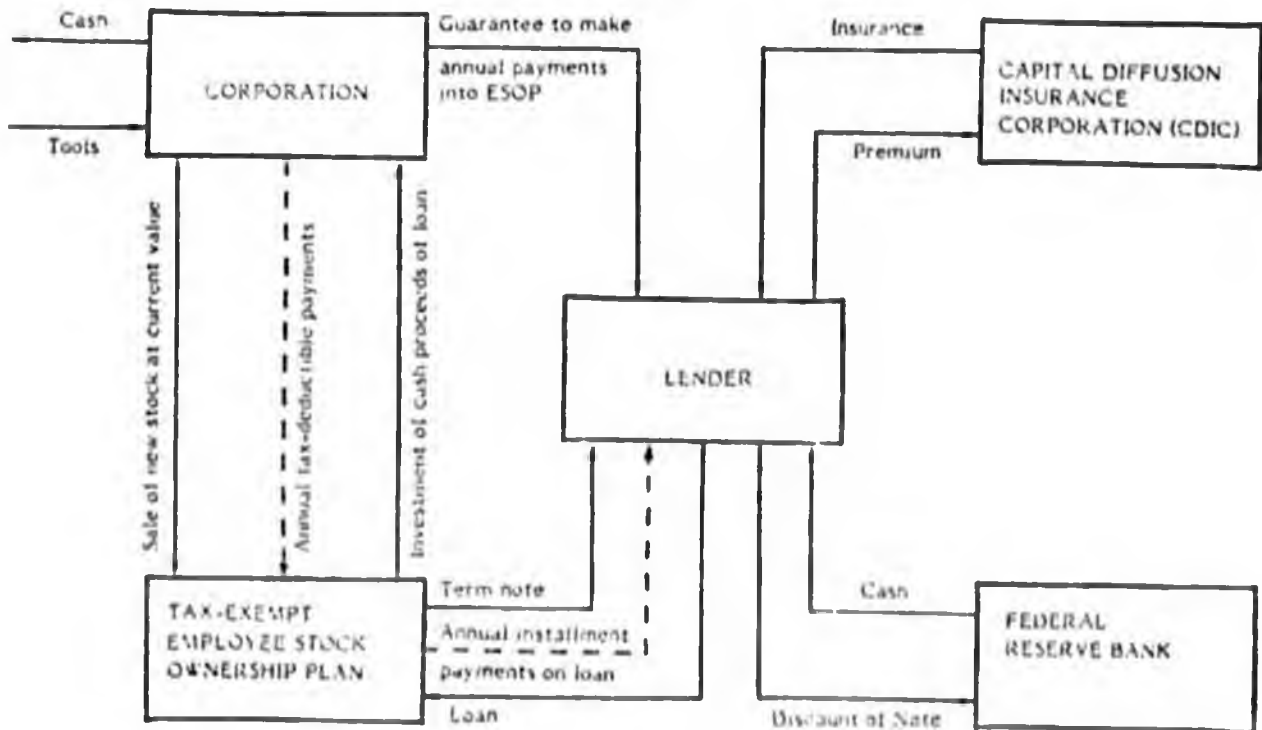


10. ESOP financing, on the one hand, provides low cost capital, through the use of pre-corporate-tax funds, to finance corporate growth, and on the other hand, builds ownership into workers without diminishing their take-home pay or calling upon their small or nonexistent savings.
11. With minor legislative changes to provide capital diffusion insurance (modeled after FHA insurance) for lenders that make sound ownership broadening loans and to make the financing paper held by lenders discountable at a rate not in excess of the administrative costs of the Federal Reserve Bank, two factor techniques provide means for financing unlimited growth, while building market power, economic security, and growing current second incomes from capital* into the masses of workers; thus the market power of potential consumers rises in step with the productive output of the economy.

*Where the stock in the ESOP pays a dividend, the plan often provides that, after each particular share of stock is paid for, the dividends on it shall currently pass through the trust into the workers' pockets.

Figure 6: FINANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH

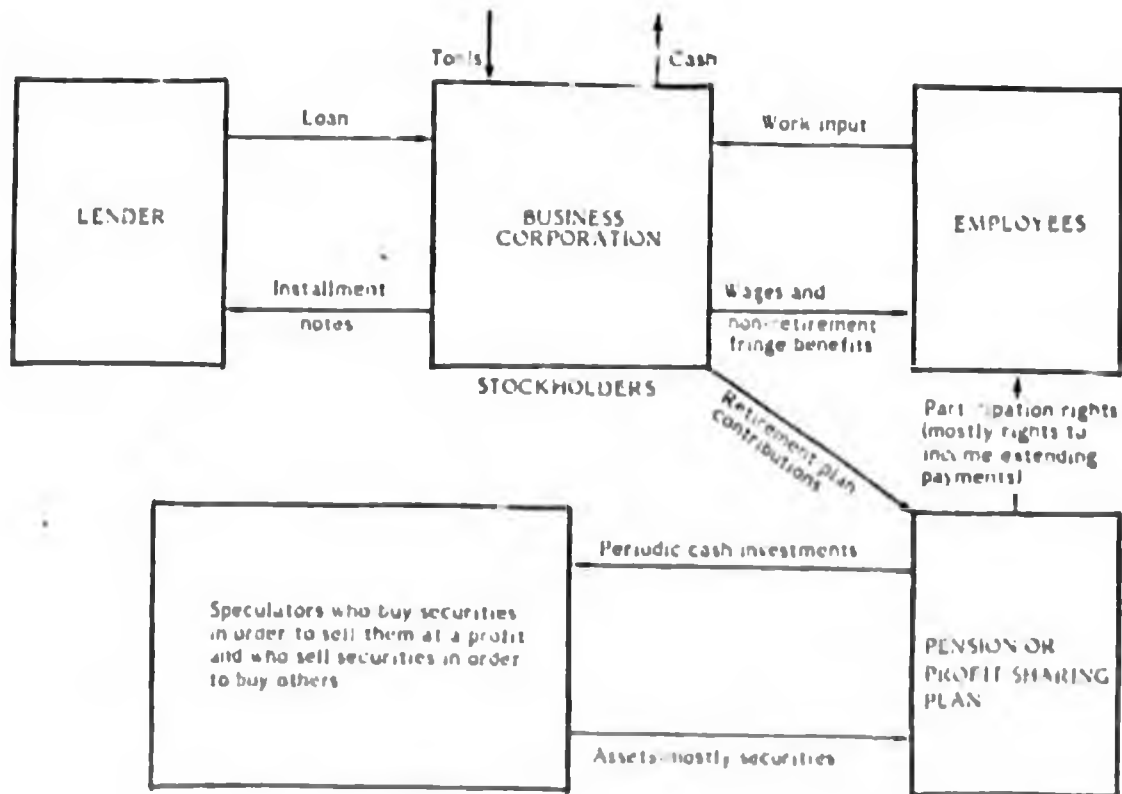
Financing economic growth by monetizing productive capital while building market power into consumers through ESOP financing



12. Inflation is eliminated. Institutional barriers, such as lack of "money" to finance solid, self-liquidating economic growth are eliminated; legitimate leisure, built upon the ownership of a holding of productive capital that will enable a man or woman to produce a viable income, becomes possible over a reasonable working lifetime; and the burden of public taxes imposed upon producers to support the non-productive and under-productive can ultimately be virtually eliminated. Fully productive households and individuals do not need to be subsidized.
13. The ESCOP is an enormous cost-saver for the corporation which--sooner or later--can substitute it for a fixed-benefit pension plan, or any other pension plan or conventional profit-sharing plan. All payments by the corporation into these conventional plans are pure cost.

Figure 7: CONVENTIONAL FINANCING OF A BUSINESS CORPORATION

Conventional financing of a business corporation, other than by sale of new stock to the public for cash, with conventional pension or profit sharing plans invested wholly in assets purchased from sources other than the employer-corporation.

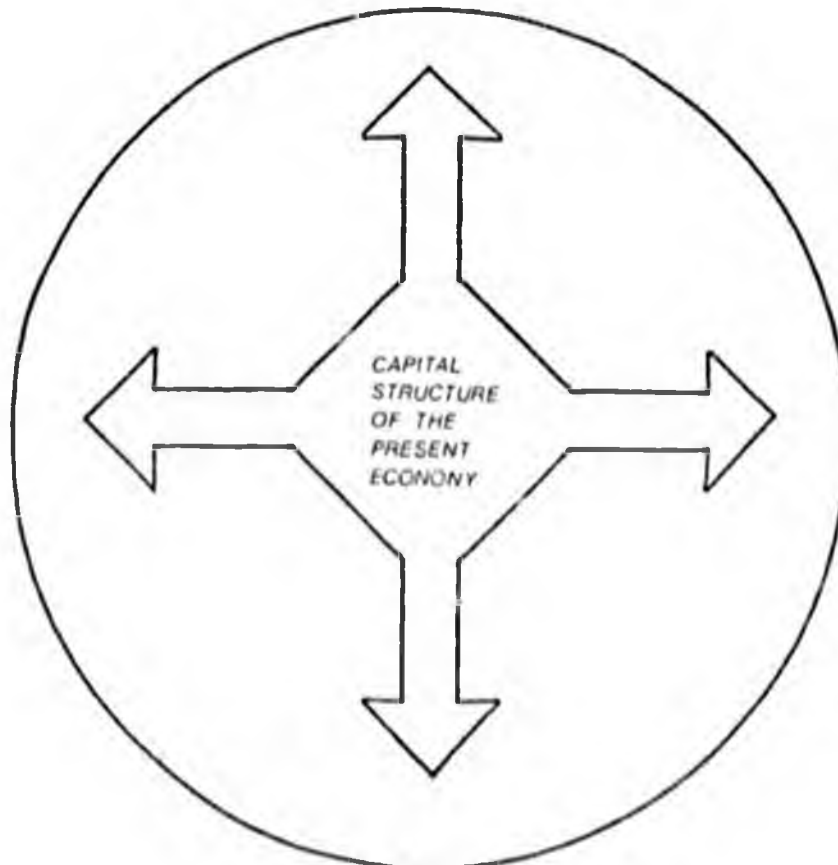


Compared with the ESOP (see Figure 5), not only does the identical dollar paid by the corporation to build stock ownership into employees also finance corporate growth, but corporate growth can be accomplished on pre-tax dollars. By comparing the ESOP (Figure 5) with conventional economic security-building plans (Figure 7), you will see that the ESOP enables the corporation to gain \$3 of advantage for each dollar spent. And it conforms to the sound economic goal of enabling employees, who work hard and well over a reasonable working lifetime, to retire singularly well off.

14. Finally, because the economic goal implicit in Two-Factor Theory is to expand the U.S. economy (and any other economy that adopts it) sufficiently to enable all consumers to live well--general affluence--while also producing the technology to protect the environment, a change to a two-factor policy by business and government could give us twenty-five years or more of legitimate full employment. This would be time enough for society to adjust to a world in which each person will spend less time in economic work and more time in the work of civilization.

Figure 8: OBJECTIVE OF TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS

Capital structure of the present economy, owned by 5% of consumers, expands ten-fold to create the SECOND ECONOMY, owned primarily by the 95% of consumers who now own no capital



SUGGESTED READING ON TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS

Books

THE CAPITALIST MANIFESTO by Louis O. Kelso and Mortimer J. Adler (Originally published by Random House, New York, 1958. Republished 1975 and presently available through Greenwood Press, 57 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880, Tel. (203) 226-3571.)

THE NEW CAPITALISTS by Louis O. Kelso and Mortimer J. Adler (Originally published by Random House, New York, 1961. Republished 1975 and presently available through Greenwood Press, 57 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880, Tel. (203) 226-3571.)

TWO-FACTOR THEORY: THE ECONOMICS OF REALITY by Louis O. Kelso and Patricia Hetter (Random House, New York, 1967; Paperback Edition, Vintage Press, 1968)

Testimony

Testimony by Louis O. Kelso before the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, December 11-12, 1975, on "Employee Stock Ownership Plan Financing and Other Financing Concepts Based on Two-Factor Economics"

Testimony by Louis O. Kelso, Norman G. Kurland and Patricia Hetter before the Senate Finance Committee, U.S. Congress, March 31, 1976, on "Major Tax Revisions and Extension of Expiring Tax Cut Provisions"

Reports and Publications

"ESOPs: An Analytical Report" prepared for the Profit Sharing Council of America, Chicago, Illinois, by Hewitt Associates, Deerfield, Illinois

"Employee Stock Ownership Plans" prepared by The Committee of Publicly Owned Companies, New York, New York

"A Symposium on Employee Stock Ownership Plans", The American University Law Review, Spring 1977, Volume 26, No. 3, prepared by The Washington College of Law, American University, Washington, D.C.

"Making New Capitalists -- A Creative Response to Income Inequities" prepared by the 1977-78 Twentieth Session, Executive Seminar in National and International Affairs, Department of State

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**A Discussion of the Financial Foundation
for General Stock Ownership Plans***

by

Stephen A. Buser
(April 1979)**

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I. Preface and Summary

A General Stock Ownership Corporation (GSOC) is not a magical money machine. In the absence of external support in some form, a GSOC cannot be expected to earn a net cash flow simply by borrowing from one group of capital owners in order to finance asset acquisitions from other capital owners. Inappropriate analogies are sometimes drawn between financed asset acquisitions that a GSOC might undertake and those that wealthy individuals and solvent firms undertake as a matter of routine. By definition, wealthy individuals and solvent firms have equity bases to cushion temporary or chronic operating deficits. In contrast, the financial condition of an unsubsidized GSOC, is similar to that of any other firm whose liabilities exceed its assets; it is insolvent. Like any other insolvent firm, a GSOC can be made to show an operating profit if given sufficient subsidies in the form of donated cash or assets, tax benefits, and/or credit assistance. However, since these subsidies would have earned a normal return if put to alternative uses, it is erroneous to attribute a GSOC "profit" to its leverage-acquisitions. Any such "profit" is simply a residual of the normal return on the subsidies invested in a GSOC, after the GSOC's own expenses have been deducted.

Therefore, despite optimistic claims by a few exuberant supporters, a GSOC is more accurately described as an elaborate financial device for capturing and redistributing the federal taxes currently paid on privately owned assets. Since these tax payments can be sizable, the implicit federal subsidy represents a potentially valuable source of State revenue. However, under the federal "enabling" legislation a GSOC's tax liability is not forgiven but instead is passed through to (and borne fully by) the citizen shareholders of the GSOC. Technically, the federal tax "break" is limited distributions in excess of the

GSOC (pass through) tax liability. This provision carries important implications both for the financial viability of the GSOC and for the form of the distribution of the federal subsidy.

In terms of financial viability, the pass-through restriction, reduces the portion of the federal subsidy that a GSOC can use to cover its own overhead and debt-service expenses. Projected GSOC operating deficits (which any pure leverage investment company would run) must be funded from some other source. Most likely, State assistance will be required on a continuing basis and in an amount that is significant when measured against the after-tax benefits received by the citizens of the State.

In an attempt to lessen its own subsidy burden, a State might direct its GSOC to acquire assets that would generate a low (or even a zero) pass through tax liability. However, to the extent that such assets also generate low tax liabilities for existing owners, the federal subsidy is reduced as well. The "solution" that seems implicit in the federal legislation is for the GSOC to acquire assets that are eligible for tax credits and/or accelerated depreciation charges from owners who have already exhausted such benefits for themselves. Since nonsubsidized firms have a similar tax incentive for acquiring such assets, a GSOC must expect to pay prices above those that would otherwise prevail in the secondary market for depreciated assets. Sales at inflated prices would allow the selling firms to capitalize a greater portion of their scheduled tax payments to the federal government, reducing the portion of the subsidy captured by the GSOC.

GSOC advocates have suggested that careful investment analysis might eliminate such overpricing. However, the GSOC's investment team, will be virtually totally dependent on projections provided by the selling firms. Experi-

enced negotiators for selling firms also have been known to cite pressing cash needs or other smokescreens in an effort to convince buyers that the assets are actually offered below the prevailing market prices. Experienced buyers recognize, of course, that if such were in fact the case, a rational seller would always sell at the higher market price unless the sale at the lower price constituted an implicit payment for some past or future consideration. Such might be the case in a "pilot" program where a selling firm has a clear incentive to "prove" that the GSOC is viable in order to establish a future flow of subsidy benefits. In other cases, selling firms may simply rely on the observation that even at inflated prices, the GSOC will show a "profit" as long as the federal subsidy is less than fully capitalized by the seller.

Despite the apparent inevitability of the diversion of GSOC subsidies to selling firms, even GSOC directors with impeccable standards may be hard pressed to determine the true extent of these diversions. Efforts at extensive investment analysis might succeed in limiting the subsidies to selling firms but only ^{by} creating another type of subsidy diversion in its place since the required analysis is apt to be quite expensive, and these costs must be subsidized as well. Regrettably, it is unlikely that even an outside "watch dog" agent (perhaps established by the State legislature) could successfully monitor GSOC activities. On the contrary, the risk appears far greater that outside pressure will be exerted on the GSOC directors to use their considerable subsidy powers in support of particular firms or banks that might be deemed "essential" to the State or local economy. In fact, it might be argued by some that the GSOC has a "moral obligation" to provide such support as long as it can do so and still show an operating "profit." For example, subsidy diversions to the shareholders of particular firms might be regarded as necessary to continue employment for

workers who might otherwise face a loss of jobs. Unfortunately, the firms destined for subsidy diversions are capital intensive rather than labor intensive so that GSOC subsidy diversions are apt to be extremely inefficient (in terms of cost per worker) as a means of providing job security.

When the inherent disadvantages of the GSOC concept are measured against the ambiguous federal support for the program, a State may decide that the "price" it must pay for a GSOC is too high in relation to the potential benefits. Even if a State determines that GSOC benefits are "offered" at a bargain under the federal legislation, the State should be aware that the citizen-shareholders in a GSOC will share the federal and State subsidies with the GSOC bureaucracy and with the firms that sell assets or lend funds to the GSOC. While subsidy diversions in small amounts might be regarded as "normal" operating costs, the potential for large-scale subsidy diversions cannot be ignored. Such diversions are not necessarily "bad," but they defeat the expressed purpose of the GSOC concept by funneling benefits to existing capital owners rather than to new capital owners. At present the "unintended beneficiaries" of a GSOC program appear to be the shareholders of capital intensive firms, as well as banks and other lending institutions that might win the favor of a particular board of GSOC directors. The federal immunity from personal income taxes on distribution in excess of the GSOC pass-through tax liability obviously benefits citizens in the highest tax brackets the most. Those who pay little or nothing in the way of taxes obviously receive little or no benefits from this tax "break." Those suffering the most from the proposed GSOC program would be firms that would have to compete with the GSOC, either in the market for credit or in the market for depreciated assets. In addition, despite the fact that the costs of the federal and State subsidies would be dispersed, every dollar of benefits distributed

by the GSOC will have to be made up, either in the form of additional tax revenues to replace those diverted or in the form of greater inflation if the lost tax revenues are not made up.

Economists note that asset transfers do not create new cash flows. In fact, transfer programs, no matter how socially desirable they might be, absorb rather than generate market value as new costs are merely grafted onto the existing economy. Thus economists place a heavy burden of proof on the proponents of particular plans to show that their plans are adequately funded (or subsidized) and that the benefits actually accrue to the targeted groups. Unfortunately, despite the force of a highly emotional call for action, the GSOC backers have not satisfied these basic requirements. "Faith" and "vision" are all that have been offered in support of the contention that a GSOC can achieve its intended goals and avoid becoming simply one more program that promises broad-based benefits but instead imposes broad-based costs and funnels the benefits to familiar recipients, the banks, the capital intensive industries, and of course, bureaucracy itself.

II. Financial Viability of a GSOC

Case 1: Viability without external support

To appreciate the limitations of the federal GSOC legislation, it is important to understand precisely how and why a GSOC is not financially viable without external support. So so, let us reexamine a hypothetical example of financed capitalism found on p. 71 of the report submitted by Kelso & Co. to the Alaska State Legislature, "Design of an Alaskan General Stock Ownership Plan, Volume I" (February 15, 1979). In that example, a Mr. Adams borrows \$200,000 and builds a fourplex which he rents out for a total of \$24,000 per year. For simplicity, the drafters of the Kelso & Co. report abstract from vacancy risk, from taxes, from overhead expenses, and even from interest on the loan. Such simplifications might have served the narrow purposes of the commission issued by the State to Kelso & Co. They do little, however, to reassure a potential lender who is concerned with the financial viability of a GSOC. For example, with an interest rate of 10% (generous by today's standards), the annual debt service on a ten-year fully amortized loan is \$32,500 rather than the \$20,000 figure used in the interest-free example. Thus even if the \$24,000 earnings figure is reinterpreted as net taxes and net of all expenses, the financed acquisition plan would fall considerably short of the goal of self-liquidation. Instead of an excess annual cash flow of \$4,000 found in the zero-interest example, Mr. Adams would have to cover a short-fall of \$8,500 per year over the life of the loan. The loan could be amortized over a longer period, thus reducing the annual debt service. However the interest alone amounts to \$20,000 per year so that a self-liquidating the mortgage would have to be written with exceptionally long maturity. At an interest rate of 12% or better, the mortgage could never be paid off out of the projected rents alone.

Advocates for the concept of financed capitalism might observe that the rental rates chosen by the drafters of the Kelso & Co. report were arbitrary and just happened to be too low in order to make sense when representative charges are introduced. Therefore, it is important to recognize that even if the example were restructured so that Mr. Adams would have been able to arrange self-liquidating financing for his investment, that does not mean he would sell his fourplex to the GSOC at a price that (in the absence of external support) would allow the GSOC to finance the acquisition with a self-liquidating loan. On the contrary, rather than sell at such a price, Mr. Adams would simply refinance any outstanding mortgage against his fourplex, in order to raise the same amount of additional cash that the sale would have produced (after repaying the loan). Thus even though the financed capitalism concept might work for original investments, the model breaks down when it is applied to asset transfers. As long as asset sellers require full compensation for the stream of earnings they relinquish, the debt service on loans to provide such compensation must exhaust the full value of the asset's earning potential. Otherwise, the alternative of financed asset retention dominates the decision to sell the asset.

In reaching this general conclusion, it must be remembered that external factors, such as tax considerations, have not yet been introduced. Similarly, differences in borrowing capacities have not yet been considered. Thus the general conclusion is not contradicted by examples of asset acquisitions that are entirely financed via self-liquidating loans to individuals or firms who can secure the loan pledging more than just the asset's own earnings. Implicit in such arrangements is the very important premise that, if needed, the borrower can draw on other funds or resources. In contrast, a GSOC has no equity base to use

as supplemental collateral for loans. Thus in the absence of external support, a GSOC would be unable to acquire assets via self liquidating loans even though equity firms and some individuals might be able to do so. GSOC's are by no means unique in this regard. Extensive analysis of investment companies (including mutual funds) confirms that these equity institutions would not be viable as pure-debt firms. I.e., they do not earn a rate of return equal to their risk-adjusted cost of capital.

Case 2: Viability under the federal legislation

The federal "enabling" legislation is not a legal requirement for the operation of a GSOC. It is merely an open admission that a GSOC is not financially viable without external support of some form. On its own a GSOC would not earn leverage arbitrage profits, it would make leverage arbitrage losses as would any other pure-debt investment company. Without an equity base or an external subsidy to offset these losses no lender would extend funds to a GSOC. This observation, more than any other single factor, explains why pure-leverage investment companies have failed to materialize on their own despite promises of sure profits offered by advocates of financed capitalism.

Recent federal legislation grants qualifying GSOC's immunity from the federal corporate income tax. Had immunity been granted in an unrestricted form, a GSOC would have been able to use a greater portion of the pretax earnings on assets to cover GSOC overhead and to service the debt raised to finance asset acquisitions. Any excess subsidy would then have been available for distribution to citizen-shareholders or for accumulation as equity in the GSOC. To illustrate this point, let us return to the previous example, and assume that the pretax earnings on Mr. Adams' fourplex had been \$40,000, of which he was required to pay \$10,000 in federal taxes and another \$6,000 in state

taxes, leaving \$24,000 for expenses and debt service. Under federal (but not state) immunity, the GSOC would have the use of \$34,000 per year, and thus, over some price range, could afford to offer Mr. Adams more for the asset than he would be able to raise via his own self-liquidating loan. At such a price, Mr. Adams would capitalize all of the after-tax earnings plus a portion of the earnings stream otherwise lost to the federal government. In such a case, both Mr. Adams and the GSOC would benefit at the expense of the U.S. Treasury.

Apparently the U.S. Congress did not intend that the federal legislation reduce to merely a tax dodge (at least not so simply). Therefore, in granting GSOC's immunity, the "enabling" legislation also mandates that the equivalent tax liability be passed through to the citizen-shareholders without regard for the special tax status of the recipients. Had the GSOC been a viable-self-supporting firm, the pass-through restriction would not have been especially significant. A GSOC would simply pass through its own tax savings in order to cover the tax liability that it must also pass through. However, the GSOC requires these (or some other) funds to cover the amount by which its overhead and interest costs will exceed its (after-tax) earnings. Thus, as presently structured, the federal legislation does nothing to improve the financial condition of a GSOC. To qualify for the tax subsidy, the GSOC must accept an offsetting financial commitment.

Despite this negative assessment, a GSOC would have the same opportunities for tax-arbitrage exchanges as any other firm would, and it might be able to make use of such opportunities to strengthen its financial base. Tax savings arise if the tax payments that would have been made by an existing owner (by Mr. Adams in the hypothetical example), are less than those that a GSOC would incur and this difference is less than fully capitalized in the sale of the asset to

the GSOC. The corresponding portion of the pre-tax earnings flow is, in effect, donated by the federal government rather than purchased from the previous asset owner. Such opportunities arise as a matter of routine because of federal tax laws that provide acquisition tax credits and/or accelerated depreciation charges which are renewable only if the qualified assets are transferred to new owners. Thus a GSOC might earn a tax-arbitrage profit by acquiring depreciable assets from owners that have already exhausted the liberal tax benefits for themselves. Unfortunately, these assets offer similar tax advantages for acquiring firms other than GSOC's. Thus GSOC's must bid against other firms for these assets, and this competition will allow the selling firms to realize even greater portions of their projected tax payments.

Since a GSOC cannot earn tax-arbitrage profits by acquiring assets from firms in lower tax brackets than the GSOC (based on the pass-through computation), the only way that a GSOC might be able to strengthen its own financial base is to divert a portion of the federal tax subsidy to the shareholders of large capital-intensive corporations seeking to unload some of their depreciable assets after the initial tax benefits have been gutted.

This description of the federal legislation is vastly different from the expressed intentions of the backers of the GSOC concept. So much so in fact, that it is difficult to imagine that the U.S. Congress had a similar goal in mind in settling on the form of this particular "enabling" legislation. It would be far easier to explain the federal "enabling" legislation as an attempt to provide large capital-intensive firms with additional relief from federal taxation.

Case 3: Viability under alternative forms of State assistance

At present, the extent of federal support for a GSOC appears anything but overwhelming. Kelso & Co. or some other source may be able to furnish a

description of the type of asset acquisitions that would recover enough of the federal subsidy to render a GSOC financial viability. As yet, however, no such encouragement has been provided. Nor is there any evidence for a legitimate reference to required State assistance as "start-up" costs. Surprisingly few of the proposed budget items are truly nonrecurring. On the contrary, virtually all of the GSOC's expenses contribute to the annual deficits that a GSOC must run in the absence of continuing financial assistance. These annual deficits are projected as substantial and must be supported from some external source. Moreover even after these deficits have been absorbed (by the State), the State must directly or indirectly provide for every dollar of benefits distributed by the GSOC (in excess of the GSOC tax liability). Recall the federal "contribution" is limited to forgiving the personal taxes that citizen-shareholders would otherwise owe on these excess distributions.

Although there are many forms that State assistance might take, any such assistance reduces to two basic dimensions, perpetual year-by-year maintenance, and/or an initial endowment. As a substitute for equity capital in a normal firm, an initial endowment of cash or earning assets would provide an income flow needed for an initial operating margin. To the extent that such an initial subsidy is insufficient, supplemental annual subsidies will be required as well. One obvious possibility for an annual maintenance subsidy is immunity from the State corporate income tax. In essence, the State could donate its own tax flow in support of the federal subsidy. Assuming that this benefit is less than fully capitalized in the sale prices of assets, the GSOC would then capture at least a part of the State subsidy (with the balance accruing to the seller of the asset as with the federal tax subsidy).

Credit assistance provides an alternative form of a maintenance subsidy. Instead of furnishing additional revenue, a credit subsidy is designed to reduce

borrowing costs and hence lower debt service claims against GSOC income. Agency status would provide the GSOC with direct access to the tax exempt borrowing market. Equivalently, the State could borrow (or divert funds from other uses) and lend to the GSOC at rates less than those charged in the fully taxable market. In either case, however, the State could have earned the higher (market) rate, on its funds and thus the State, should regard the difference in revenue as a subsidy to the GSOC.

Loan guarantees have been proposed as a low cost form of subsidy. Unfortunately, it is only the visibility of the cost that is low. In any insurance situation, such as a loan guarantee, it is not the visible or out-of-pocket expense that determines the true cost to the insurer. Far more important is the associated risk that must be borne. Without a highly diversified asset base to support precise actuarial assessments, the invisible costs of insurance are usually regarded as prohibitive rather than as negligible. If lenders (who are apt to be more highly diversified than the State) believed that these costs were negligible, they would not offer a substantial reduction in rates in exchange for a loan guarantee. The fact that lenders are willing to accept less interest in exchange for a loan guarantee indicates that they presume that the implicit risks are high. In effect, lenders are betting the difference in interest charges that even with massive federal and State subsidies, the GSOC may be overextended in relation to its financial commitments. It is important to note that financial overextension can arise even if the asset portfolio of a firm is of the highest possible quality.

A normal firm that is overextended but otherwise sound is referred to as undercapitalized. In order to raise debt capital, such a firm may first have to raise additional equity capital. In the case of a GSOC, there is no initial equity capital, only a subsidy base. If this base is insufficient to assure an adequate

operating profit margin, the condition of the GSOC is analogous to that of the undercapitalized firm. Loan guarantees provide an additional subsidy, and eliminate the lender's risks. But, since there is no reason to presume that the State has any advantage over lenders in terms of bearing such risks, any apparent "profit" from selling loan guarantees (in exchange for lower borrowing costs) is purely illusory.

In terms of pure cost effectiveness, direct cash payments provide by far the most efficient form for subsidies since they are the least costly to administer. However, these payments are also the most visible and therefore they are often the least attractive from a political standpoint. Opting for less visible but also less efficient forms of subsidy makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the State to assess the extent of its own subsidy. (Just as it is already difficult to assess the extent of the subsidy implicit in the federal GSOC legislation.) For a State that is truly concerned about the extent of its own subsidy to the GSOC program, it is especially important to consider only the most cost-effective and visible subsidy program. It is difficult to imagine what is to be gained, other than short-run political expediency, by burying the unavoidable costs of a GSOC through a series of complex financial arrangements.

III. Distribution of the federal and State subsidies

A GSOC may be useful as a device for capturing and redirecting federal tax revenues on earning assets. However, the GSOC's own budget, no matter how spartan, can only draw from the subsidy pool. Moreover, even before the subsidies get to the GSOC, a portion will be diverted to asset sellers in the form of inflated market prices. An additional portion of the subsidies will be absorbed by banks and other lenders who earn more money from engaging in leverage-arbitrage of their own than they do by creating those opportunities for others.

This observation explains why the powerful bank lobby did not oppose the "enabling" federal legislation. That lobby would almost certainly have opposed any serious attempt at diffusing stock ownership since it is precisely this issue--disintermediation--that the banks have lobbied against for so many years. However, the GSOC legislation promises to cut banks in on the subsidy (at least those banks who win the favor of the GSOC directors).

Under scrupulous and cold-blooded financial management, it might be possible to hold the subsidy diversions to a minimum. But to do so, the GSOC's directors must turn a deaf ear to the pleas of special interest groups. It is to be expected, however, that the GSOC directors will be besieged with requests for help from particular firms or industries that might be deemed essential to the State or local economy. Moreover, the subsidy diversion would be largely hidden in the sense that the GSOC still would be able to show a "profit" as long as it retains enough of the subsidy. Thus it may be difficult for GSOC directors to defend a decision to "support" some firms and some banks but not others. Such dilemmas always raise the possibility that political or other nonfinancial factors may influence the operating decisions of a GSOC.

In sum, while supporters may yet be able to show that GSOC benefits outweigh the additional costs that a State must bear under the federal "enabling"

legislation, thus far, little evidence has been offered in support of that contention. Instead, the case that has been presented is long on moral posturing, and long on railing against the sorry state of affairs that now exists, but painfully short in terms of sound economic reasoning that would lead one to believe that a GSOC offers any reasonable hope of achieving the expressed objectives. If left unattended, the existing biases in the federal legislation would funnel benefits to existing capitalists, as stockholders in banks and capital intensive firms, and to new GSOC bureaucrats, leaving an as yet undetermined fraction for (excess) distribution to citizen-shareholders. Even this distribution is regressive in the sense that the federal tax savings is greater for those in higher tax brackets. Since the same citizens must pay for the State subsidies (as well as their portion of the federal subsidy) either in the form of increased taxes or in the form of increased inflation (assuming that taxes are not raised), it is far from clear that the benefits outweigh the costs for any group of citizens. It should be clear, however, that the society as a whole loses since new costs are created but no new revenues are created to pay for those costs.

In the absence of "clarifying" analysis, the decision before the Alaska State Legislature appears to be one of whether or not to assist capital intensive firms in recovering part of the taxes they currently pay to the federal and State government. If so, a GSOC might be an appropriate vehicle, one that would also benefit selective banks and would create supporting jobs through its own bureaucracy. If sufficiently subsidized through tax benefits, loan guarantees, etc., a GSOC might even produce a modest excess cash flow to citizen-shareholders. However, if this is the ultimate goal, the State would be far better off to scrap the proposal for a costly administrative structure (the GSOC) and eliminate the subsidy diversions by simply distributing to its citizens the equivalent of the

proposed State subsidies to the GSOC. If it is deemed essential that checks be considered as "dividend" dispersements rather than as transfer payment (which they will be in either case), then the State might adopt a more ennobling title such as "the return on a citizen's share in State Wealth." It is doubtful that many citizens will feel all that different once they have cashed their checks. Only the banks and the capital intensive firms appear to have a strong financial incentive for favoring the more cumbersome and costly GSOC alternative.

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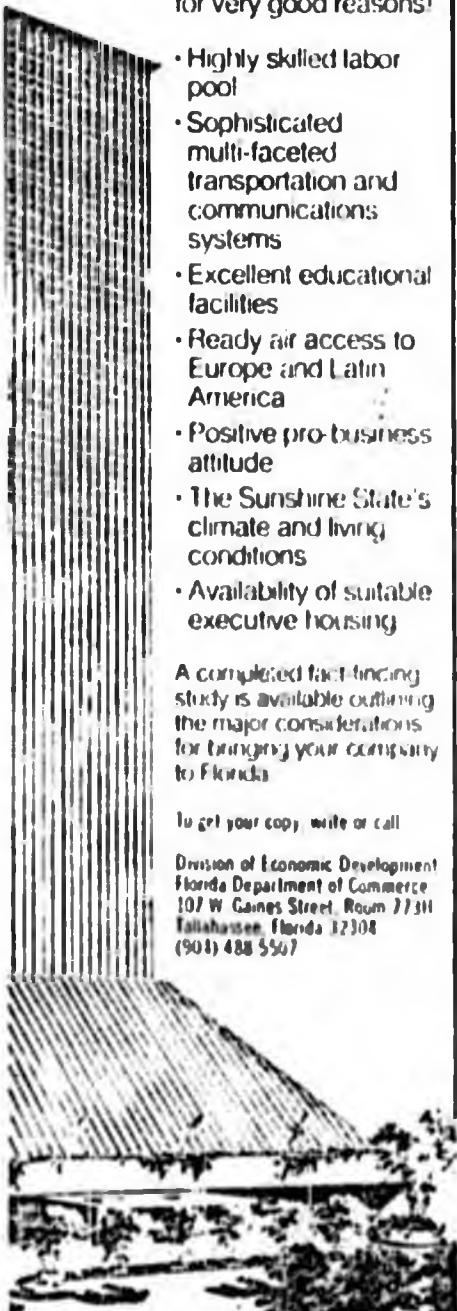
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Senator Gravel finally got his Government Stock Ownership scheme into law, but who, all things considered, wants it?

A bad idea whose time, alas, came



Senator Gravel of Alaska
A curious way to build a constituency for capitalism.

By Fern Schumer

IN THE Waning hours of the 95th Congress a new economic animal was born—the Government Stock Ownership Corp. The GSOC (pronounce it “Gee, Sock”) owes its life to Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska, who, in the rush toward adjournment, tacked the idea into the big tax-cut bill. It is an odd beast, a sort of state-chartered mutual fund. A state could use its credit to borrow right and left for the GSOC, so that the corporation could invest in stock. It would distribute each year at least 90% of the profits to its shareholders, who, in turn, would be credited with the income for federal tax purposes. (Shareholders would not be able to use GSOCs as tax shelters, however, because they would not be allowed to flow through any losses.)

In theory, any state can now set up a GSOC. One can almost hear the bond salesmen and underwriters of the world bracing to handle a flood of new state-guaranteed issues. But, in fact, few are likely to, and only Alaska, with its huge natural resources and small population, seems more than mildly interested.

Not the least peculiar thing about the GSOC beast is that it all but totally separates risk from reward. If the Alaska legislature runs with the idea, each of Alaska's 405,000 residents would receive a free share of stock and its dividends. But the corporation's only real asset in the beginning would be the state's ability to guarantee huge loans, the proceeds of which would be invested by the corporation. As in any state, however, a lot of Alaskans don't pay taxes. Furthermore, Alaska is unique in that it has a native group of people who live off the land and have no cash income. Is it fair that only taxpayers absorb the risk of GSOC, while an initial group of Alaska residents reaps the benefits?

After the stock has been distributed, of course, there will also be an ever-growing divergence between the stockholders, on the one hand, and taxpayers and citizens on the other. As people move to the state, they may not be eligible for a share of stock. At the same time, citizens who lived in Alaska and have since moved may still own stock.

The scheme would create a conflict between the risk-bearing taxpayers and

other stockholders. For instance, GSOC proponents are talking about investments on the scale of \$1.5 billion. (That money the corporation might buy BP's 16% share of the oil pipeline. (BP is rumored to be eager to get its money out to help cover mounting exploration costs in the North Sea and elsewhere.) In that case, the state would be guaranteeing a \$1.5 billion loan—its total indebtedness now is only \$694 million, with guarantees in various forms for about another \$400 million. The state's credit rating would clearly be affected. If it needs to borrow more money, say, for a public works project, interest rates would be higher. Who would pay these higher rates? The taxpayer, of course. The stockholders who are taxpayers would have a direct, obvious stake in the corporation's profits and a less obvious inter-

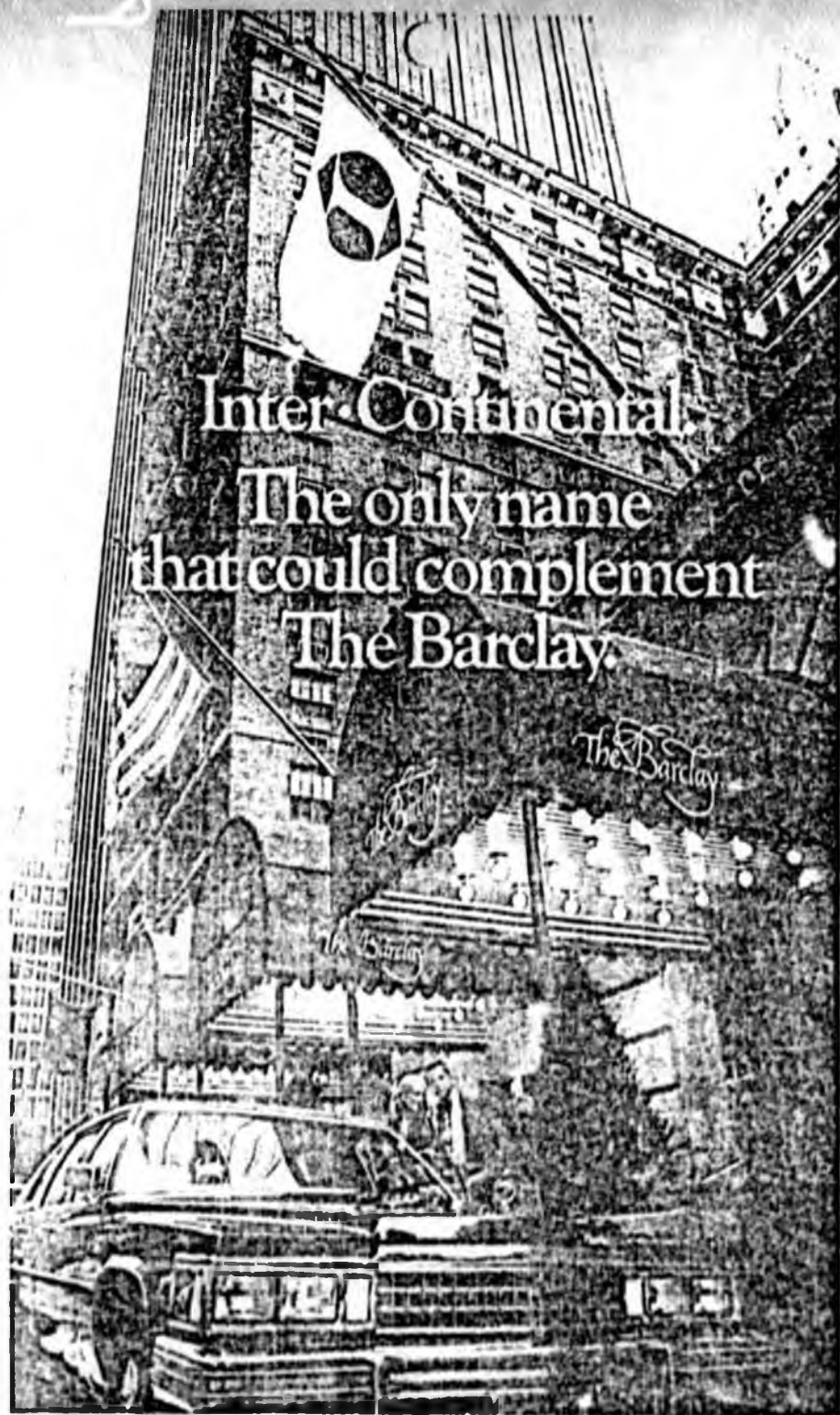
"Not the least peculiar thing about GSOC is that it all but totally separates risk from reward. Is it fair that only taxpayers absorb the risk while an initial group of Alaska residents reaps the benefits?"

est in holding down taxes.

Gravel nevertheless, is pushing GSOC as a way "to build a constituency for capitalism." He got the idea from the theories of economist Louis Kelso godfather of the employee stock ownership plans in effect at a good many U.S. companies. Alaska shows at least tentative interest in pushing the idea. The state has given Kelso a \$180,000 contract to draw up a GSOC blueprint and is spending an additional \$60,000 on other related consulting work. Kelso's blueprint is due next February, and the legislature is expected to tackle it shortly after that.

Gravel's staff has looked with particular longing at BP's 16% share of the Alaska oil pipeline. That would produce revenues of \$106 million a year, they reckon. After operating costs and annual debt payments, about \$158 million would be left to distribute to shareholders. That, each of Alaska's citizen shareholders would get a dividend check for \$390 a year. BP projects its revenues will be \$322 million this year and \$437 million next year if the pipeline runs at capacity.

GSOC, in a way, is another offspring of Proposition 13. "People recognize that once the money flows into the state treasury, it's harder to get it back into the hands of the people," says Milt Barker, a fiscal expert for the state legislature. GSOC may be perceived as one way to refer the money into the people's hands. But the Alaska legislature had better take a hard look at Kelso's blueprint and add up the hidden costs before it funds the nation's first GSOC. ■



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April 10, 1979

The Honorable Mike Miller
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Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Miller:

We are writing you to comment upon the principal items covered by the memorandum from The Honorable Avrum M. Gross, Attorney General (by Mr. Joseph K. Donohue, Assistant Attorney General), to The Honorable Frances Ulmer, Director of the Division of Policy Development & Planning, under date of March 19, 1979. We understand this memorandum has been considered by both State Senate and State Assembly Committees, but is presently before the State Affairs Committee. The subject of the memorandum is "Policy & Legal Issues Surrounding AGSOC Legislation (SSSB 170 and SSHB 240)". The memorandum states that it is in response to a request from The Honorable Frances Ulmer for a brief outline of the various issues which the Administration should review in the context of the analysis of the AGSOC legislation presently pending before the legislature.

The memorandum itself, the care and astuteness used in its preparation, and the wisdom of Miss Ulmer in requesting it, all attest the high degree of responsibility and thoroughness with which the legislature is studying the AGSOC legislation. We hope that our comments on certain of the provisions of the memorandum will prove of use to your Committee, and to others to whom you may wish to distribute copies.

For simplicity of reference, we will initiate each of our comments with a reference to the paragraph or paragraphs and to the page number in the memorandum of March 19th or 20th (March 20th being the date used on its separate pages). We will also number our paragraphs for easy reference in case you wish to ask questions or comment on this letter.

1. THE FIRST FULL PARAGRAPH ON PAGE 3

The question of whether the State should follow the policy of the federal legislation and exempt AGSOC from State corporate income tax and from certain other State level taxes which might otherwise be imposed on the corporation are, of course, precisely the kinds of questions that only the legislature can answer. There is one erroneous statement at the end of the paragraph, however, and that is that

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our firm, as investment bankers, is presently recommending "the new AGSOC purchase BP's share of TAPS." We, in our instructions from the legislature, were expressly requested to avoid recommendations as to AGSOC's investments, although, basically to illustrate feasibility, we believe, we were asked to do a feasibility study of that particular purchase.

In general, it will be obvious to your Committee that the taxes imposed on AGSOC at the corporate level would simply slowdown the rate at which AGSOC could amortize its debt incurred in acquiring productive investments from time to time, and thus slowdown the rate at which AGSOC is effective in building capital ownership into each Alaskan resident.

2. THE LAST FULL PARAGRAPH ON PAGE 3

In the last paragraph at the bottom of Page 3 (erroneously reproduced in our copy at the top of Page 4), it is postulated that by purporting to give each resident of the State a direct interest in the development of the State's natural resources, AGSOC would become an independent voice for more rapid exploitation of those resources, and that because the AGSOC is required to pay out substantially all of its net income to residents of the State, it "would likely" become a lobbying force for lower State taxes. We do not believe that these conclusions are by any means obvious or sound. It apparently has been overlooked that while AGSOC, as a corporation in which every resident owns an interest, is intended to build capital ownership in each such resident each resident also has other and independent interests. He has an interest in the overall tax impact on him. Thus if reducing the taxes on AGSOC raised his personal income tax, or his property tax, he would certainly take both into consideration and either of these events would undoubtedly have a far greater individual effect than lowering State taxes of the corporation of which he is a shareholder. It is inconceivable that AGSOC would become a lobbying force contrary to other basic interests of the residents of Alaska, simply because its stockholders would have ultimate control over AGSOC.

To be sure, as independent and privately owned capital is built into Alaskan residents, there will be less need for welfare and redistribution of income within the State of Alaska. The very theory upon which AGSOC is structured asserts that by enabling each resident to become, to whatever degree possible, economically autonomous and independent, such resident will be freed from the indignity of seeking welfare and other taxpayers will be freed from the unpleasant task of being forced to support strangers through taxation used for welfare purposes. These are "trade-offs" of a political and economic nature, but the underlying theory of AGSOC is that economic self-sufficiency through the ownership of income producing capital is preferable to welfare for some and redistributive taxes for others. We believe that this point should be clearly and thoroughly debated by the legislature and the question of whether the legislature prefers the prin-

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ciple of capitalism or the principle of socialism should be determined.

3. THE SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS BEGINNING AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 4
UNDER SECTION II. FINANCING

It is represented in the memorandum that Louis Kelso testified before the Joint Committee and has stated to various Administration officials that AGSOC will be able to obtain financing on the private market without recourse to State guarantees or State credit. This is not, we believe, an accurate summary of my personal testimony and statements to various Committees and to various individuals in the legislature.

I have pointed out that in addition to start-up funding in order to make AGSOC an operating reality, it should then seek the best sources of funding available. Some investments, it is possible, can be acquired through collateral financing, or other conventional types of corporate finance. On the other hand, some investments may require support by the State or by some appropriate or appropriately created State agency. The important point to be focused upon in this area is that conventional corporate and business finance tends specifically to make the rich richer and to fail to make the poor richer. We do not see how it can be considered objectionable for the people of the State to use their collective power to assist the individual residents -- all residents at the outset and new residents as these grow in significant numbers -- by amendments to the State and federal legislation, or by the Alaskan State Legislature's specifically incorporating future AGSOCs -- AGSOC-I, AGSOC-II, etc.

The points made in the remainder of Section II should, of course, be considered by the legislature in the light of the existing Constitutional provisions and the existing State machinery for backing up an enterprise -- AGSOC -- that is a private corporation but whose activities will address themselves to the solution of a public problem. AGSOC is a device to carry into practice preventative economic measures to avoid future poverty and to improve future affluence for Alaskan residents as a whole. We submit that these are noble public purposes and that in considering the use of the power of the State to support investments made by AGSOC, all of the income of which is commanded to be distributed to the stockholders of AGSOC, the legislature should not impose administrative barriers that would prevent AGSOC from competing effectively with giant corporations for investments. Investments of AGSOC will benefit all the residents of Alaska whereas investments of the traditional giant corporations primarily benefit the pinnacle wealth owners, a few of whom may be Alaskan residents, but most of whom will be non-residents and perhaps even non-U.S. citizens.

For our part, it would seem that the wisdom of the legislature in appropriating particular funds that can be used as guaranty funds is adequate assurance of careful review by the legislature on behalf of the people as a whole.

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4. SECTION III. LEPOLITICIZING THE AGSOC BEGINNING ON PAGE 7

In general, it appears to us that the discussion here is made-up not of legal analysis primarily, but rather of political concerns.

In the first paragraph under this item is the statement that "it should be noted that there is nothing in the federal legislation which would preclude the AGSOC's establishment as a state agency or public corporation." We believe this is a misinterpretation of the federal law, which requires that a General Stock Ownership Plan be a private corporation even though its shareholders must include, at the outset, all residents of the State as of a date selected by the legislature and as of the date of the issuance of its stock.

We disagree with the unwarranted conclusion drawn in the paragraphs at the bottom of Page 7 and on Page 8, et seq. that, if successful, AGSOC would quickly become highly politicized and an extremely powerful force -- in fact a Fourth Branch of Government. If AGSOC were permitted to accumulate its net income and thus develop a vast reservoir of funds which it could spend as its Board of Directors saw fit, then these comments might be justified. But that is precisely what AGSOC is designed to avoid. Its income is promptly translated into the income of its broad base of stockholders. It is not designed to be a powerful entity for anyone except the people of the State as a whole. As the shareholders gain power, their power to control AGSOC, through election of directors and through the power, under general law, to initiate a suit to have questioned in court a misuse of funds by AGSOC, is, it would seem to us, an ironclad guaranty that AGSOC would never become a branch of government in any form.

Because of its very size, and its potential economic importance to the enormously broad base of Alaska residents, we do not believe the speculation that ultimately one-tenth of the residents could wind-up owning all of AGSOC. One very simple reason for this belief is that if the residents do not tenaciously hold on to their AGSOC stock, the legislature is free to incorporate successive new AGSOCs and to add assurances that they do keep their individual economic power and independence.

Thus we regard it as simply improbable and unfounded speculation that any "power blocks" of residents could be established or that, if established, they could not be controlled quite easily by stockholders' derivative litigation.

With the absolute necessity that for many if not most of its investments AGSOC will look to the economic power of the State, as determined by the legislature, to give it access to federal or private credit, we think that there is no basis for imagining that AGSOC could develop a constituency over which it has no control whatsoever. We also believe that since AGSOC must pay its income to its stockholders, and has no duty except to develop and produce wealth and to distribute

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it to those citizens, that the Board of Directors or the management of AGSOC could not become a political center or political leader of any kind whatsoever.

The last paragraph on Page 8 speculates that "Although one could argue that AGSOC violates the fundamental political theory of the State Constitution which established only three branches of government***". As noted above, AGSOC is not, and could never be under the proposed legislation, a branch of government of any kind whatsoever. It is an instrumentality created by the State, just as the State creates the laws under which business corporations in general can be established, but upon which the government, State and Federal, have imposed limitations to assure that it will work for all residents -- all stockholders -- rather than for one, or a few, as present corporate giants do. Having made a false assumption that AGSOC could be a "Fourth Branch of Government", it is natural to speculate on all the dangers that would flow from this impossible situation. The recommendation for bureaucratic regulation appears to us to be totally unwarranted and would impede the potential efficiency of AGSOC to improve the economic status -- legitimately -- of all residents of Alaska. There is no virtue in bureaucratic regulation as such. The stockholders would annually vote on directors and upon all issues put to them by the Board or by stockholder initiative. A broader and more diversified base for AGSOC could hardly be conceived. The power of AGSOC is in its stockholders, not in its Board of Directors or its management.

Sight seems to have been lost of the fact that AGSOC is meticulously designed as the new method of financing economic growth and development for the purposes of attacking the cause rather than merely the effects of poverty. This is precisely what it is designed to do and precisely what it must do under its structural regulations. That is its purpose. Since AGSOC must pay out substantially all of its earnings to its shareholders, its sole function is to connect each resident with capital ownership and income. Could a more desirable goal be conceived?

5. BEGINNING AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 8 AND CONTINUING ONTO PAGE 9 OF THE MEMORANDUM

The problem is raised that members of the Board of Directors of AGSOC could use their position as a forum for criticizing the Administration's economic policies and ultimately as a launching pad for State elective office.

This is not a very real concern because the only official obligation of the members of the Board of Directors of AGSOC is to develop and produce Alaskan wealth for ownership by every Alaskan resident. When members of the Board of Directors periodically run for election as such, if they are incumbents, they do so on their performance record, as does any elected official, public or private.

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The freedom of particular directors and/or officers of AGSOC to criticize the State's economic policies is nothing but the Constitutional right of all U.S. citizens to free speech. Precisely the reverse exists as well. The Governor, or any Committee of the legislature, is free to criticize the investments of AGSOC. It would appear to us that the absolute dependence from time to time of AGSOC upon specific legislative provision of economic support for its investments assures that any free speech that passes between the Board of Directors of AGSOC and any branch of the State Government will be tempered with these realities in mind.

Any activity within or without the State of Alaska could theoretically be a "launching pad" for public office. But AGSOC as an entity that makes every resident more affluent will increase the possible opportunities of every resident to run for State office, and to participate in local State and community affairs. This is a more democratic basis for the State than where only a few people can afford to run for office. Does Alaska want more or less democracy?

In the first full paragraph on Page 9 of the memorandum, it is suggested that AGSOC be prohibited from lobbying and from making political contributions to candidates for State offices. We would think it entirely proper that AGSOC be prevented from making political contributions out of its funds to candidates for State office. Indeed, since it must periodically come under the scrutiny of the entire legislature and the Governor, we find it difficult to imagine that such prohibition would not be voluntarily imposed upon itself. But nothing would be lost by including such limitations in the legislation.

However, we have grave reservations about "strict proxy review mechanisms" that would cause the directors to act in "a politically neutral fashion". AGSOC is not designed to act in a politically biased fashion, nor does its design so permit. It has one function: to make each resident wealthier and to deliver that wealth to him periodically and dependably. Nothing more. What the residents of Alaska do with their wealth would seem to us to be their business.

On general legal principles, it would appear to us that any stockholder of AGSOC could institute legal action to restrain AGSOC's Board from using the potential income belonging to the residents as stockholders for the benefit -- any benefit -- of the Board of Directors.

Only totalitarian states adopt edicts to shield bureaucrats from speaking freely, but AGSOC's single purpose assures the ease of its stockholders in holding it to the performance of its sole purpose.

6. CAN AGSOC BECOME A CENTER OF CONCENTRATED ECONOMIC POWER?

This question is raised at the bottom of Page 9 and on Page 10 of the memorandum. We believe that this is random and unrealistic

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speculation.

It is quite true that because of the vastness of its stockholder constituency, AGSOC should seek to invest in massive and highly productive economic developments and activities. But it is not true that this can lead to its becoming a "major force for concentration of economic power in the State***". The design of AGSOC specifically makes this impossible for the very simple reason that it is required to pay out all of its income to its shareholders. That its shareholders will become more affluent, less dependent on redistribution of wealth, less dependent on welfare, and more powerful, is elementary. But this is the same as saying that its shareholders are the ones who have the power to scrutinize, correct, and contain any potential concentration of economic power in AGSOC.

The same is true of the risk that AGSOC may violate the Federal anti-trust laws. We have seen no lack of ability on the part of the Federal Anti-Trust Division to watch over this area of business activity. The periodic supervision by the legislature at the time it grants added support for any further investment by AGSOC assures that the State legislature itself can consider the question of whether any anti-trust monopoly action is involved. Certainly the absolute inability of AGSOC to accumulate internal funds defeats its power of ever exercising the main means by which business corporations violate anti-trust laws, namely by withholding the "wages of capital" from the owners of capital (the stockholders) and accumulating those funds to buy monopolistic power. Again, AGSOC is designed to make this impossible. We cannot conceive of the slightest need for any added limitations in this area.

We submit that the last sentence in the last paragraph on Page 10 of the memorandum, in itself, recognizes the improbability of the speculation involved in the preceding paragraphs. The fact that the stockholders of AGSOC and the people of the State are, and at all times will be identical, merely shows that AGSOC is, by its design, constrained through its broad ownership, and through the right of the legislature to launch any number of additional AGSOCs and to dry up its source of funding, designed to avoid any of the conflicts thus imagined.

Since the type of conflicts imagined in Pages 9 and 10 of the memorandum are unrealistic and cannot occur, the remedies proposed on Page 11 for this non-existent danger would seem to be entirely unnecessary. AGSOC's designed trust obligation -- to develop and produce wealth for all Alaskans -- assures that any wasteful or improper use of its resources could be enjoined by any of its stockholders under general principles of corporate law. The imagined problems simply do not and cannot exist, and if they did, they could be quickly restrained under these generally applicable legal principles.

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7. PAGE 11, SECTION IV. CORPORATE DEMOCRACY

That the existence of classification of directors would limit the ability of minorities within the State to obtain representation on the Board of Directors of AGSOC is, in our opinion, without foundation in fact. Board classification is desirable to promote stable policies in corporate matters. The possibility of an entirely new Board being elected each year would be highly undesirable. Board membership will be in a corporation charged with a trust to represent all the people of the State of Alaska.

On the question of cumulative voting, we do not see, in a corporation with a stockholder base as vast as that proposed for AGSOC, that there would be any advantage in insuring cumulative voting. On the other hand, we see no disadvantage in assuring that cumulative voting must exist.

On the question of limiting the duration of any voting trusts, made in the paragraph at the bottom of Page 12, it would appear to us that this suggestion is a good one.

Similarly, providing for shareholders to initiate amendments to the Articles of Incorporation would be desirable where a substantial shareholder initiative, say 10%, or even 5%, of the registered shareholders' signatures would be required. It would not be desirable to permit a tiny handful of stockholders to upset the efficiency of the corporation in making its day-to-day decisions.

8. DESIRABILITY OF A HIGH FORUM REQUIREMENT

This would seem to us to simply impose clumsy procedures on the State's prime weapon in building preventative economic power into its citizens, i.e., measures to prevent future poverty from arising. AGSOC will be under a constant obligation to educate its stockholder constituency about the economics of capitalism and will, of necessity, become a source of economic education because it will enable, for the first time in history, every Alaskan to become a capital owner. To go further than this would seem to be probably wasteful in terms of paperwork and a pointless waste of time.

9. LEGISLATION ASSURING ADEQUATE NOTICE OF MEETINGS

In the second paragraph on Page 14 of the memorandum, suggestions with respect to this are made. We would think this entirely proper if the restriction does not obstruct reasonably efficient governance of the corporation.

10. THE CORPORATE BY-LAWS

The memorandum suggests that the power to amend the By-Laws should be reserved to the shareholders "in order to ensure adequate public review." We believe that such a provision would be too expen-

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sive and too restrictive in terms of efficient governance of the corporation, and excessively wasteful of time.

11. AGSOC'S FINANCING OF PROXY FIGHTS, ACCESS TO VOTING LISTS AND VOTING MACHINERY

We believe that the suggestion made in Paragraph 8 on Page 14 would be salutary if the signatures of 10% or more of shareholders were required. Otherwise, the corporation could waste time dealing with mere adventurers.

12. SECTION V. PRIVATE CORPORATION: CLOSED CLASS OF SHAREHOLDERS

In this matter, covered on Pages 15 and 16 of the memorandum, we believe that the first paragraph on Page 15 is in error in stating that federal legislation mandates that the shareholder group in AGSOC be made up of a "closed class" in any realistic sense, for the simple reason that it imposes no limitation upon the number of AGSOCs which the Alaskan Legislature could authorize. Thus a longtime resident might well wind-up holding shares in ten or fifteen different AGSOCs, while those who depart the State would only own shares in those AGSOCs whose stock ownership qualifications they had previously met.

The "scenario" imagined by the author of the memorandum in the second paragraph on Page 15 is simply unrealistic. The preventative economic measures involved in establishing AGSOC that strike at the cause of poverty rather than merely at the effects of poverty hold more promise for eliminating poverty than all past measures, State and Federal, dealing with this subject, for those measures merely apply band-aids to the effects of poverty.

The problems imagined here are under year-to-year control by the legislature since AGSOC must be created by a separate act of the legislature. Other AGSOCs can be created at will by the legislature. Changes in the law concerning transferability of its stock can be made by the legislature if experience proves that such changes are warranted. It is contemplated that the full thrust of AGSOC's educational stockholder relations program will induce most stockholders to hold onto their shares as their dearest economic possessions.

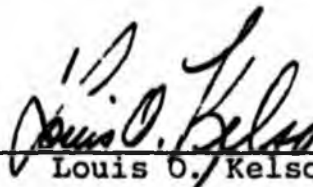
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We hope that the foregoing comments will be of use to your Committee in its deliberations. We would be pleased to respond to any requests for elaboration or to any questions.

Sincerely,

KELSO & CO., INCORPORATED

By


Louis O. Kelso

By


John A. Miskimen

LOK/JAM:ch

cc: ✓ The Honorable John G. Fuller,
Vice Chairman, State Affairs Committee
The Honorable Terry Gardiner,
State Affairs Committee
The Honorable Bill Parker
State Affairs Committee
The Honorable Terry Martin,
State Affairs Committee
The Honorable Ray H. Metcalfe,
State Affairs Committee
The Honorable Richard Eliason,
State Affairs Committee
Frances Ulmer, Director, Division
of Policy Development & Planning

10. [Frances Ulmer, Director
Division of Policy
Development & Planning

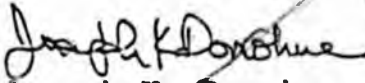
DATE: March 19, 1979

FILE NO:

TELEPHONE NO:

FROM: AVRUM M. GROSS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

SUBJECT: Policy & Legal Issues
Surrounding AGSOC Legislation
(SSSB 170 and SSHB 240)

By: 
Joseph K. Donohue
Assistant Attorney General

You have requested a brief outline of the various issues which the Administration should review in the context of the analysis of the AGSOC legislation presently before the legislature (SS for B 170 and SS for HB 240). The following is an outline of those issues from the Department of Law's perspective:

I. TAXATION

The Revenue Act of 1978 added Subchapter U to the Internal Revenue Code 1954, 26 U.S.C. §1391 through §1397. This legislation provides for the creation of a general stock ownership corporation (GSOC) and it authorizes special tax treatment for those corporations which qualify. The federal legislation requires that all GSOCs be chartered by an act of the State Legislature or by a referendum and further requires that each state charter provide as follows:

1. That the charter provide for the issuance of only one class of stock;
2. That the charter provide for the issuance of shares only to eligible individuals; "eligible individuals" are further defined as those who are residents of the State as of the date specified in the State's enabling legislation and who continue to be residents of the State as of the date of the issuance of the shares;
3. That the charter provide for the issuance of at least one share of stock for each eligible individual;

4. That the charter provide that no share of stock shall be transferred by the shareholder other than by will or by intestate succession, until after five years from the date of issuance (except where the shareholder ceases to be a resident); that no share of stock be transferred to a person other than a resident; and that no share of stock be transferred to any individual who would as a result of the transaction acquire more than ten shares of the GSOC.

In addition, the GSOC may not acquire more than twenty percent of the shares of any other existing corporation; the GSOC may not acquire property through the right of eminent domain; the GSOC's charter must mandate that it qualify as a GSOC under the Internal Revenue Code; and finally, the GSOC must be chartered and organized between December 31, 1978, and before January 1, 1984.

Thus, AGSOC (Alaska GSOC) as set out by Louis Kelso's proposal in SSSB 170 would create a corporation whose shareholders consisted of every resident of the State of Alaska as of the time the State charter goes into effect who remain a resident until the date of the first issuance of the AGSOC shares. The AGSOC is treated as a private corporation and not as a governmental unit for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code, except that a qualifying AGSOC is not subject to federal corporate income taxes. Instead, AGSOC's "taxable income" which is calculated in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code (with minor exceptions not relevant here) would be attributed directly to the shareholders in proportion to the number of shares held and would be taxed as individual income to those shareholders. This dividend income does not qualify for the exclusion from gross income normally associated with the first \$100.00 of dividend income. See 26 U.S.C. §116.

The AGSOC is required to distribute at least ninety percent of its "taxable income" for any tax year. 26 U.S.C. §139 (a). The failure of an electing AGSOC to make the required ninety percent distribution would subject it to a penalty of twenty percent of the excess amount required to be distributed over that amount actually distributed. The federal scheme is intended to give the AGSOC a significant competitive advantage since the corporation can operate free of corporate income taxes at the federal level. On the other hand, this ten percent maximum on retained earnings

may, indeed probably will, prohibit a corporation's expansion into major new investment areas on the basis of these earnings alone. New investment opportunities which arise in the future would require AGSOC to again obtain significant debt financing which may, in turn, require multiple state guarantees.

The first question which arises is whether or not the policy evidenced by the federal legislation (i.e., freedom from corporate income taxation) should be paralleled at the State level. The present SS for SB 170 would operate to exempt the AGSOC from the State's corporate income tax levied pursuant to AS 43.20. See AS 43.20.021, which incorporates by reference subchapter U of Chapter 1 of subtitle A of the Code. AS 43.20.021 provides for a delayed incorporation of tax exemptions. Those provisions of the Code adopted after 1975 "which change or modify exemptions from tax or credits against tax are not adopted by reference as a part of this chapter until the second January 1 following the effective date of the federal law". Here GSOC's exemption would go into effect at the State level on January 1, 1980. The AGSOC, however, would be subject to state severance taxes (AS 43.55), state oil and gas property taxes (AS 43.56), as well as the state's new oil and gas corporate income tax (AS 43.21.010) should the AGSOC invest in oil and gas production or pipeline transportation property. The investment opportunity presently recommended by Kelso's group is that the new AGSOC purchase BP's share of TAPS.

AGSOC's investment in the oil and gas arena would present several important policy questions which should be analyzed prior to the Administration's endorsement of the present legislation. By purporting to give each resident of the State a direct interest in the development of the State's natural resources, it would become an independent voice for more rapid exploitation of those resources. Because the dividends to the residents would, as presently proposed, be directly affected by the nature and extent of the State oil and gas tax policy, it would likely become a lobbying force for lower State taxes. Obviously, lots of tradeoffs are involved, but the political and economic issue reduces itself to the following: Would it be better to expedite resource development and lower State taxes in such a case in order to allow AGSOC's shareholders to benefit directly (albeit by only a marginal increase in their dividend) and at the same time deprive the State treasury of potentially enormous revenues which could be devoted to various social welfare programs? These programs would ultimately return greater proportionate benefits to those in the lower income brackets in the State and possibly lesser benefits (than AGSOC) to those in the upper income brackets.

However, they have also indicated that there was a significant probability (about 75%) that AGSOC would have to return to the Administration and to the legislature, and ultimately to the people at the polls, for approval of a major extension of State credit or guarantees to secure loans of sufficient size to enable AGSOC to invest in TAPS, construct a gas line, etc.

SSSB 170 presently contains only one financing device-- 10.50.100. The bill proposes the creation of a loan guarantee fund which will be a special fund segregated from all other funds of the State. It purports to be a trust fund for the uses and purposes of this section, but no uses and purposes are set forth in that section. As proponents of the measure have stated that the sole purpose is to guarantee loans for startup or organizational costs of the corporation, they have agreed to both clarify the uses to which the monies can be put and to a statement of a definite limit on the appropriations into the fund (\$5,000,000.00). In addition, this section charges the Commissioner of Revenue with reviewing applications for loan guarantees (for the purpose of guarding against fraud and misrepresentation). It is suggested that the Commissioner of Revenue be given broader review powers such as the ability to disapprove a loan on the basis of its general inadvisability.

To accommodate these various concerns, the following substitute for AS 10.50.100 contained in SSSB 170 is submitted for consideration:

A) There is a special fund of the State known as the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation Loan Guarantee Fund, which shall not exceed \$5,000,000.00. and which shall be completely segregated from all other funds of the State. This fund is a trust for the uses and purposes of this section.

B) The Commissioner of Revenue shall use the fund to guarantee loans solely for startup costs (and not to include major investment financing) made to the corporation by lenders other than the State. In guaranteeing loans, the Commissioner of Revenue shall review the loans for the purpose of ascertaining the general soundness of the proposed loan and for the purpose of guarding against fraud

and misrepresentation. The guarantee of a loan may not be for an amount in excess of the unobligated balance in the fund at the time the guarantee is made.

Whereas the above minor technical changes can clarify or limit the general purpose of the loan guarantee fund as originally proposed, the manner in which AGSOC would approach the State and apply for an appropriation or legislation which would enable them to utilize the public credit of the State of Alaska to guarantee a major investment in the future is not treated in this bill. Senator Gravel has testified that such an extension of public credit would be in accordance with the procedures which pertain to the issuance of general obligation bonds which require the ratification of the voters at the polls. Thus, Senator Gravel has argued that no major extension of public credit would occur without the ultimate participation of all the voters of the State who would, of course, include most of the AGSOC shareholders.

Senator Gravel is basing his procedural argument on Article IX, §8, State Constitution, which states:

"No state debt shall be contracted unless authorized by law for Capital improvements and ratified by the majority of the qualified voters of the State who vote on the question."

Although the issue deserves further review by this department, it is suggested that this provision on its face does not apply to the type of guarantee contemplated by Senator Gravel and the proponents of the AGSOC, since the investment would not qualify as a capital improvement authorized by law under this section. See City of Juneau v. Hickson, 373 P2d 743 (Alaska 1962).

Rather, it would appear that Article IX, §6, applies in this context:

"No tax shall be levied, or appropriation of public money made, or public property transferred, nor shall the public credit be used, except for a public purpose."

Under this provision, all that would be required for an extension of credit to the AGSOC would be legislation appropriating a sufficient amount of money to guarantee AGSOC's commitment. Thus, it appears that something on the order of a loan guarantee fund on a vaster scale would in fact be required but such legislation would not be subject to voter ratification at a subsequent general election. Since Kelso's investment consultants have based their advice on the assumption that there could be a call on the general credit of the State without a significant appropriation to back up any guarantees, the ability of the State treasury to make such an appropriation and its fiscal impact on other State programs has never been carefully analyzed.

Thus, three questions need to be considered: (1) Whether there is any constitutional mechanism for extending the State's credit without the necessity of a large appropriation which may not be fiscally sound or economically feasible; if not, whether AGSOC's proponents who have assumed the availability of access to the State's credit have any alternative suggestions for the financing of the corporation which should be statutorily treated at this time; (2) Whether this statute should incorporate a statutory procedure or requirement for voter ratification of any major investment proposal, funded by direct appropriation into a guarantee loan fund; and (3) Whether a constitutional amendment would be required to allow the State to guarantee AGSOC's loans.

III. DEPOLITICIZING THE AGSOC

The proponents of the AGSOC have conceived of this entity as operating as a private corporation subject to the very few qualifications imposed on it by federal law. Thus, the corporation is subject to the standard provisions of the Alaska Business Corporation Act, AS 10.05, except where inconsistent with the state or federal enabling legislation. The proponents have argued that AGSOC stands the best chance of being a success, (i.e., operating at a profit which will be shared in by most Alaskan residents) if it is structured as a completely private corporation. However, it should be noted that there is nothing in the federal legislation which would preclude the AGSOC's establishment as a state agency or public corporation.

No matter how the AGSOC is ultimately designed, it would be foolhardy to believe that this entity would not quickly become highly politicized and ultimately, if it is successful, become an extremely powerful political force in

the State. Assuming it is established as a private corporation, it would present the following issues:

A) AGSOC: A Fourth Branch of Government

A successful AGSOC, representing as it would the residents of the State of Alaska would in essence, become a fourth branch of government. It will be a fourth forum in which State environmental, social, economic and tax questions will be vigorously debated. The Governor's control over this corporation is limited to appointing the first board of directors. After that the corporation will, as presently designed, operate completely independent of any state agency, albeit it will be subject to all applicable state regulatory provisions. Given the composition of the corporation, it would become quickly susceptible to the pressures of any cohesive organized group of residents within the State, such as large labor unions, native corporations, etc. That is, any private organization containing a large number of resident votes could well form a block in the nature of a voters' trust, which could be used to gain control, or at least to form an influential minority on the board of directors.

The board, and indirectly management, would be subject to election by the same or a similar constituency as the Governor of the State. Thus, the chairman of the board could conceivably end up representing a larger number of Alaskan residents than the Governor of the State. The Governor would be put in the somewhat anomalous position of dealing with a more popular, albeit apolitical, leader representing the fourth estate, i.e., AGSOC.

Although one could argue that AGSOC violates the fundamental political theory of the State Constitution which established only three branches of government, this objection is more of a philosophical one than a legal one, and it is not anticipated that any such challenge could be successfully formulated and presented to the State courts. Finally, under this general category of concerns relating to its impact on the present institutional balance of power as contemplated by the State Constitution, it should be noted that

management of the corporation, members of the board of directors of the corporation, could, and very well might, utilize their position as a forum for criticism of the Administration's economic policies and ultimately as a launching pad for State elective office.

B) Specific Constraints: Lobbying and Political Contributions. Since AGSOC will purport to represent the people of the State of Alaska, it could be argued that since that function is also served by the Governor of the State and by the legislature in the political arena, AGSOC should be prohibited from participating in that same arena, or at least be made subject to stringent restrictions. It is suggested that AGSOC should be prohibited from lobbying, from making political contributions to candidates for State offices, and that strict proxy review mechanisms should be added to the bill to ensure that the board of directors act in a politically neutral fashion. For instance, AGSOC's board, in its annual report, would be allowed to analyze the impact of State taxes on its percapita dividends. However, the board would not be able to affirmatively encourage the shareholders to write their legislators and call for a lower rate of taxation. The shareholders would have to draw their own conclusions. Obviously, the shareholders would then be allowed to contact their legislators and express their opinion on the subject.

Furthermore, a AGSOC endorsement of a political candidate would obviously be a cherished one. Even though AGSOC's proponents at present claim that this corporation is merely another private corporate entity, we have absolutely no guarantees that management in future years will not take full advantage of its position as representative of the residents of Alaska and try to see its political and economic policy preferences implemented by vigorous participation in the political arena. AGSOC endorsements and political contributions might therefore best be prohibited.

C) Litigation With The State. AGSOC, just like any other major corporate entity, would become subject to various State regulatory laws, and the

possibility for confrontation is obvious. For instance, should AGSOC become the vehicle for financing the gas line, AGSOC would have a corporate interest in raising the tariff on the pipeline which would be assessed against the State, and the State as producer and shipper would have an interest in lowering the tariff in order to maximize State royalty and severance tax revenues to the treasury.

In addition, the proponents of AGSOC have stated on several occasions that in order for it to result in tangible benefits to the individual Alaskan shareholder, it must invest in vast development projects which will involve vast returns (hopefully). Thus, there is every likelihood that AGSOC would become a major force for concentration of economic power in the State and might ultimately develop or acquire monopoly control over one or more economic sectors. This, in turn, would present anti-trust problems, both under state and federal law, and the following scenarios are possible: 1) Since AGSOC is not a State agency, it would not enjoy the "state action" exemption from the federal anti-trust laws and it would likewise be subject to treble damage actions for any economic injuries arising out of violations of the Sherman or Clayton Anti-Trust Acts, 15 U.S.C., §1, et seq., and (2) The State could find itself litigating at great expense against AGSOC in order to require it to divest itself of various interests, or to require it to cease and desist from some specific anti-competitive practice.

The anti-trust example is one of many. It could occur in the environmental sector, the banking and securities area, the tax area, or in any other area of commercial endeavor. The State and AGSOC, if engaged in litigation with each other, would be drawing on resources which ultimately affect the same individuals, i.e., the taxpayers versus the shareholders. Should the State prevail and obtain a fine, such a fine would, itself, seem counterproductive.

Some suggestions for mitigating the underlying irony of the State litigating against the people of the State, i.e., AGSOC, and the potential for enormous waste of common resources which is inherent in any extensive litigation such as a protest of a pipeline tariff, might be as follows:

1) When a dispute arises between the State and AGSOC, the matter could be held in abeyance until the next legislature to allow the latter to determine by legislation the proper resolution of the matter; or the matter could be submitted to an arbitration panel established by statute.

2) Other means of controlling litigation between AGSOC and the State would be to create a disincentive to any litigation. One such disincentive would be a modification of the court rules relating to the award of costs and attorney's fees to provide that the State would always be entitled to receive its actual costs and attorney's fees incurred in the litigation of any action involving AGSOC. In addition, AGSOC's right to costs and attorney's fees would arise only in those cases where the court makes an express finding that the State's prosecution or defense was frivolous or lacking in good faith.

IV. CORPORATE DEMOCRACY

One of the most important policy questions which must be addressed in any analysis of AGSOC is whether or not resident shareholders' right to participate in and to influence corporate decision making is adequately protected or assured by the normal corporate procedures set forth in AS 10.05. The following is a list of specific issues which the administration and the legislature should address in its analysis of the AGSOC legislation:

1) Classified Directors. The present sponsor substitute provides for a board of directors consisting of nine members divided into three classes of three members each. Three directors will therefore be eligible for an election during any one year. See AS 10.50.030. A highly classified

board of directors such as this would limit the ability of minorities within the State to obtain representation on the board of directors. Every shareholder has one vote, and if all nine directors were elected at the same time, there is a greater opportunity for minorities such as native organizations, etc., to elect at least one board member. A highly classified board would tend to heavily favor urbanized Alaska.

2) Cumulative Voting. AS 10.05.162 presently provides that shareholders may, at an election for directors, cumulate their votes by giving one candidate as many votes as the number of directors to be elected, multiplied by the number of that shareholder's shares. However, a corporation may provide in its bylaws (modified by board of directors' resolutions) that shareholders cannot cumulate their votes but must vote shares held by them on an election-by-election basis. Cumulative voting is another device to help ensure minority representation on the board of directors. By leaving it optional, as stated in AS 10.05.162, the board of directors could amend the bylaws to prohibit cumulative voting. It is suggested that it might be desirable for the AGSOC legislation to expressly state that cumulative voting cannot be prohibited by shareholder or by director action.

3) Voting Trusts. In accordance with AS 10.05.171, voting trusts may be created by any number of shareholders who wish to confer upon a trustee the right to vote or otherwise represent the shareholders for a period not exceeding ten years. The existence or toleration of voting trusts within the AGSOC context is a question which should be carefully analyzed. At this point in time, it is suggested that their prohibition might be advisable or at least a limitation imposed on the number of years that they can remain in existence. For instance, AGSOC proponents indicate that the original AGSOC will be coming back to the legislature for each major investment proposal. Thus, within a ten-year period, two or three major investment schemes may have been considered and acted upon, and a ten-year voting trust would allow a trustee undue amount of influence over any of these decisions.

4) Amendment of The Articles of Incorporation. AS 10.05.276 presently provides that the board of directors shall adopt a resolution setting out a proposed amendment directing that it be submitted to a vote at the annual or special meeting of the shareholders. Thus, it appears that the initiative to amend the articles must come from the board, and it may be desirable to provide for an amendment which would allow the shareholders to propose amendments to the articles of incorporation that can be taken up and voted on at annual meetings.

5) Quorum of Shareholders. AS 10.05.153 presently provides that, unless otherwise provided in the articles of incorporation, the majority of the shares entitled to vote constitutes a quorum in a meeting of shareholders. (The section provides for a minimum of one-third of the shares.) The quorum requirement is something that the legislature may wish to mandate by statute. Here, of course, the higher the quorum requirement, the greater the difficulty the corporation will have in holding an annual meeting. However, a high quorum requirement would necessitate vigorous promotional and educational programs to ensure the presence of the quorum at each annual meeting and might indirectly spur the corporation to greater efforts to include or request the participation of all shareholders of the State in corporate decision making.

6) Notice of Meetings of Shareholders. AS 10.05.138 presently provides that meetings of shareholders may be held at the place (either inside or outside the State) as may be provided in the bylaws. In addition, an annual meeting of the shareholders shall be held at the time provided in the bylaws. Special meetings of the shareholders may be called by the president, the board of directors, and holders of not less than one-tenth of all the shares entitled to vote at the meeting.

AS 10.05.141 in addition requires written or printed notice of all meetings, such notice shall be delivered not less than ten nor more than fifty days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail.

Obviously, together these rules operate to favor incumbent management. Annual meetings could

be rescheduled by a change in the bylaws which requires a vote of the board of directors. The board could, on short notice, i.e., as little as ten days, present the shareholders with any major issue it chose, such as the election of new directors or consideration of a major investment proposal.

The legislature might well wish to consider statutory safeguards which would ensure adequate notice of the time, place and purpose of any meeting which would preclude manipulation of the timing of any meeting to the advantage of the incumbents.

7) Bylaws. AS 10.05.135 presently provides that the board of directors shall have the power to alter, amend or repeal the bylaws unless it is reserved to the shareholders by the articles of incorporation. Again, it is suggested that the amendment of the bylaws might be a power which should be reserved to the shareholders in order to ensure adequate public review of any change in the management's approach to the conduct of the corporation's business.

8) Financing of Proxy Fights, Access to Voting Lists and Mailing Machinery. Several commentaries concerning modern corporate battles note the inherent advantage which incumbent management has through its control of the corporate machinery for sending out mailings, soliciting support, and arguing its cause before the shareholders. This is done at corporate expense, whereas opposing or dissenting shareholders frequently have to finance such efforts from private sources. Amendments might well be considered which would allow shareholders who can obtain a certain number of qualified signatures to utilize the corporation's mailing machinery at the corporation's expense. This procedure should be especially encouraged in the context of elections for the board of directors. Candidates who can either obtain a nomination by the board of directors or the support of a pre-determined percentage of the shareholders should be entitled to publish information concerning themselves, their experience, their policy preferences and their criticisms of existing management at the corporation's expense.

V. PRIVATE CORPORATION: CLOSED CLASS OF SHAREHOLDERS

Two other constitutional issues should be mentioned briefly in this context. First, the federal legislation authorizing the creation of GSOC mandates that the shareholder group be made up of a closed class (i.e., those residents who satisfy the eligibility requirements imposed by state law as of the date of the state charter, and who remain residents as of the date of the issuance of the shares). Thus, future residents would be ineligible for one of the free shares of AGSOC. Under Kelso's present plan, AGSOC shareholders who leave the state and become nonresidents would be entitled to retain their dividends and voting rights in AGSOC. Persons leaving the state who wish to sell their shares could, of course, sell to new residents who wish to participate in the AGSOC. In addition, oldtime residents could acquire as many as ten shares in AGSOC through purchase or inheritance.

These two factors, when combined, could lead to the following scenario: The initial one hundred percent of the AGSOC shares could be concentrated in as few as ten percent of the original shareholders. Those shareholders, in turn, could become residents of other states, and thus it is theoretically possible that ten or twenty years from the original issuance, AGSOC shareholders could be composed of a select group of resident Alaskans and nonresident former Alaskans. Ironically, it may be at this very time that the state may be called upon to honor its guarantee, and thus the state's credit rating and ability to issue bonds at favorable interest rates would be adversely affected, and the people who would be called upon to bear the burden of AGSOC adventures would be the taxpaying class of Alaskans at that time. This potential for a sharp dichotomy between the shareholder class of AGSOC and the resident population of the state deserves closer analysis. Kelso's report contains no estimates of the transiency rates of the Alaskan population and no projections as to the future composition of its AGSOC.

The legal issue which overlaps this general policy question is whether or not the closed class nature of the AGSOC offends the equal protection provisions of the state or federal constitutions. Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, in their memorandum of December 15, 1978, on the constitutional issues, felt that such a provision might be successfully

defended against a federal constitutional challenge. A closer question is presented under the state constitutional provision which has been interpreted somewhat more stringently than its federal counterpart. See Isakson v. Richey, 550 P2d 359 (Alaska 1976). Under this provision, a substantial question is raised as to whether or not the AGSOC arbitrarily discriminates against future residents of the state.

Secondly, a derivative issue is whether or not the use of the public credit for the direct benefit of a private corporation whose shareholders will, over time, form a distinct class within the state (possibly a minority class) qualifies under the "public purpose" requirement of Article IX, §6 of the Alaska State Constitution.



*PARTICIPATION
DISTRIBUTION
LIMITATION*

AGSOC
THE FINANCIAL PLUMBING

Hearings before the
State Affairs Committee
March 20, 1979

Submitted by:
Jeffrey R. Gates
Hewitt Associates
Lincolnshire, Il.

THE AGSOC - AN OWNERSHIP STRATEGY

The American Dream - A Piece of the Action

Iron Law of Development - consume less, invest more
Catch-22 - Iron Law of Ownership

The Financial Plumbing of Stock Ownership (See Exhibit 1)

Captive Capital - Less than 10% of stock transfers are for
directly fostering new capital formation.

New York Stock Exchange 1975 shareowner census:

- (1) 5-year decline of 18.3%.
Quantitative vs. qualitative measure.
- (2) Average age of typical shareholder increased
five years over 5-year span.

Joint Economic Committee figures re stock ownership (1975):

- (1) 0.5% own 50%.
- (2) 1% claim 46% of dividends.
- (3) Working non-professionals (76% of work force)
own 19%.

(See Exhibit 2)

Debt:Equity ratio for U.S. manufacturers rose from 23% to
43% from 1964-1974.

Consumer Debt:

1960 - \$56.1 billion
1976 - \$217.8 billion

Comments from the Media - Why ESOPs are also called "Kelso Plans"
(See Exhibit 3)

Historical Context

Industrial Homestead Act (See Exhibit 4)
Life, Liberty and ... (See Exhibit 5)

Contractual Context - Access to Ownership

The Evolving Social Contract

"A corporation is an artificial being, invisible, intangible,
and existing only in the contemplation of the law. Being
the mere creature of the law, it possesses only those prop-
erties which the charter of its creation confers on it, either
expressly, or as incidental to its existence."

-John Marshall-

Market Context

Work Ethic - The Employment Act of 1946

"All we seek is an America; where every person is given the chance to productively contribute to his country and where he can receive a fair and equitable share of the wealth that production creates."

-Coretta Scott King-

Industrial Context

Exchange Ethic

"Salary" vs. "Compensation"

Salary - salt; "not worth his salt", "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Compensation - a balancing of accounts (See Exhibit 6)

Post-Industrial Context

Incomes policy designed as participation-in-production policy
The Affluent Society (1958) - "device for breaking the nexus between production and income security"

Breaking the nexus:

Federal Expenditures

1960 - \$91.3 billion

1979 - \$504 billion

Federal Budget

1960 - slight surplus

1978 - deficit of \$61.7

Federal Transfer Payments

1960 - \$20.6 billion

1979 - \$198 billion

"There are no free lunches on welfare."

-Joseph Califano-
Secretary of HEW

"There is no more complete rejection of a person than to give them a job you know and they know is useless."

-F. Ray Marshall-
Secretary of Labor

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

VAN NOSTRAND
REINHOLD

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FIGURE ONE

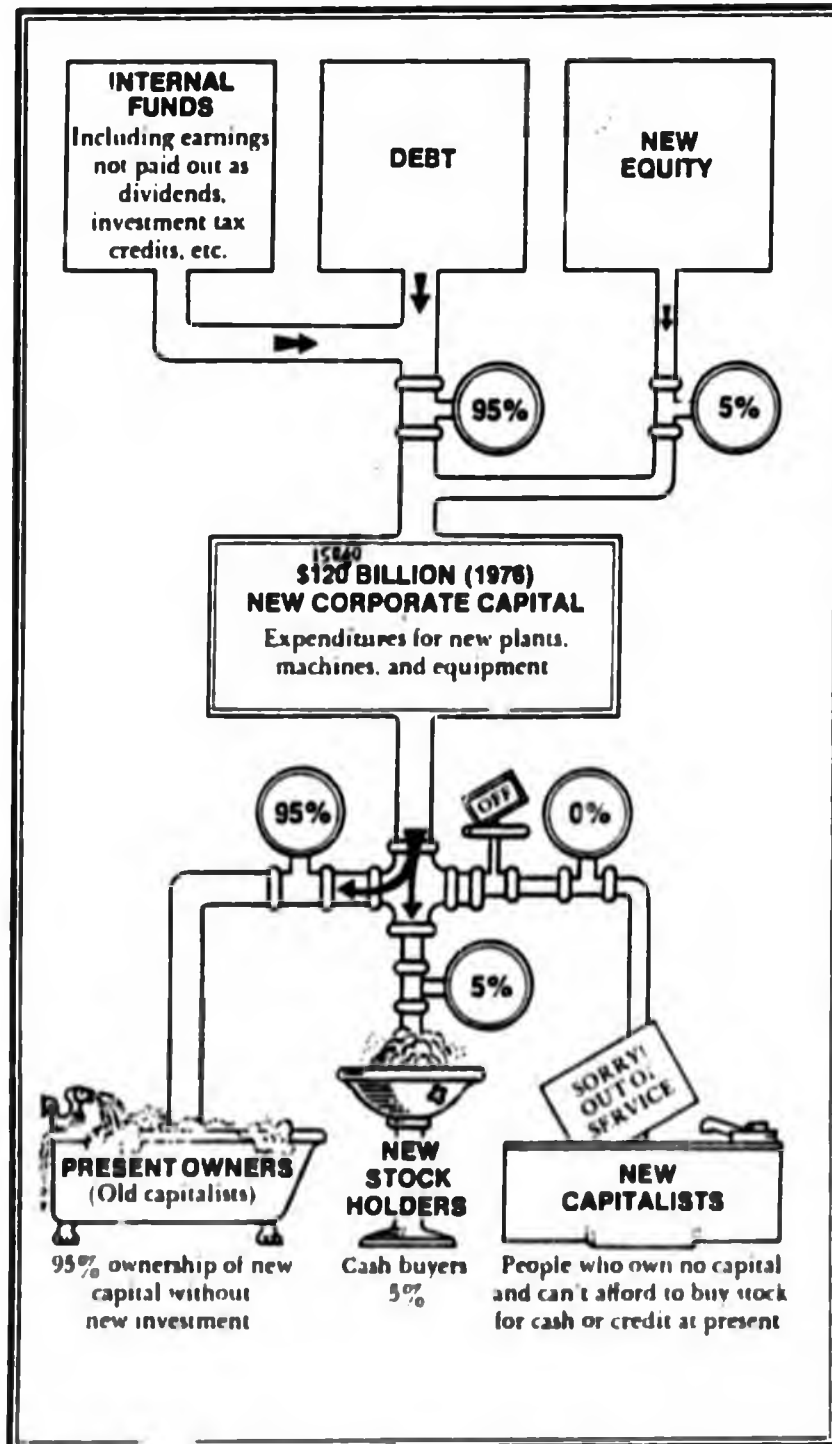
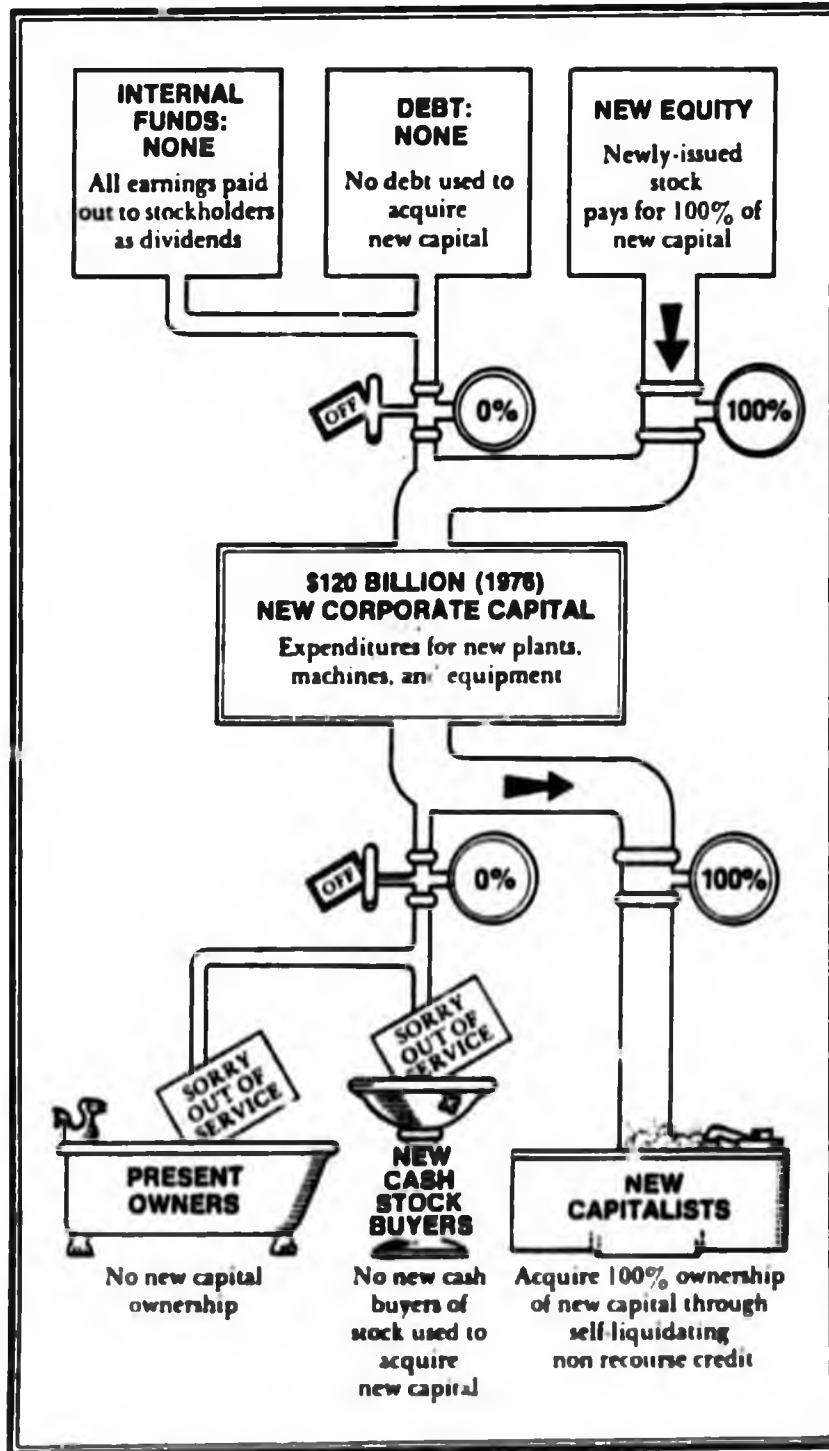


FIGURE TWO



PERSONAL WEALTH: COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION

Personal wealth in the U.S. in 1972 totaled \$4.3 trillion while net worth totaled \$3.5 trillion. Evenly distributed, this would mean that the average sized family would have a financial net worth of \$59,200. Less than one family in eight approached that figure in 1972:

TABLE 1.—PERSONAL WEALTH, 1972

Asset	All persons (1)	Value (billions) held by the richest—		Share held by the richest—	
		1 percent	6 percent	1 percent	6 percent
		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Real estate.....	\$1,492.6	\$225.0	\$645	15.1	43.2
Corporate stock.....	870.9	491.7	629	26.5	72.2
Bonds.....	151.0	94.6	124	68.0	78.5
Cash.....	749.8	101.2	278	13.5	37.1
Govt instruments.....	77.5	40.8		52.7	
Life insurance.....	141.0	10.0	475	7.0	40.5
Trusts.....	99.4	89.4		89.9	
Miscellaneous.....	853.6	83.3		9.8	
Total assets.....	94,344.4	\$1,035.9	\$2,152	21.1	49.5
Liabilities.....	258.5	131.0	360	16.2	37.1
Net worth.....	3,535.9	915.9	1,852	25.9	52.4
Number of persons (millions).....	209.0	2.1	12.8		

Source: Cols. (1), (2), and (4): James D. Smith and Stephen D. Franklin, "The Distribution of Wealth Among Individuals and Families," 1973. Cols. (3) and (5): Internal Revenue Service, "Personal Wealth," 1976.

From: "Broadening the Ownership of New Capital: ESOPs and Other Alternatives," A staff study of the Joint Economic Committee (1976) p. 7.

This JEC report notes that "... the distribution of income has remained virtually unchanged since World War II: the top quintile of the population holds just over 40 percent of the income and the lowest quintile has 5 percent. Even these figures understate how rich the rich really are for the top quintile of families have almost 80 percent of total wealth. Clearly, income will not become more equally distributed in this country until the base of wealth holdings is broadened." Id.

Other studies document that wealth is even more concentrated than the JEC indicates:

Robert J. Lampman, National Bureau of Economic Research, The Share of Top Wealth-holders in National Wealth, 1922-1956, (Princeton University Press, 1962).

Marshall E. Blume, Jean Crockett and Irwin Friend, "Stock Ownership in the United States: Characteristics and Trends," Survey of Current Business, November, 1974 at 16.

Expanded Ownership, (Sabre Foundation, 1971). This contains a survey of the studies on "The Distribution of Wealth in the Twentieth Century," by Prof. James D. Smith of Pennsylvania State Univ.

COMMENTS FROM THE MEDIA
WHY ESOPs ARE ALSO CALLED "KELSO PLANS"

Kelso and Adler's book could start a revolution.

Casper Weinberger
February, 1958

In those discussions there is as much of the wanderings of a madman as there is of cannibalism.

Pravda, March 25, 1959
in a review of The Capitalist Manifesto (1958) by Kelso & Adler

A crackpot theory. Instead of saying labor's exploited, as Marx did, Kelso says capital's exploited. It's worse than Marx. It's Marx stood on its head.

Milton Friedman
Time, Jan. 29, 1970

I think some economists such as Milton Friedman have given too short a shrift to the Kelso plan. It's an example of one means of accomplishing a broadening of wealth ownership... a quiet evolution in wealth ownership rather than the unquiet revolutions wealth owners have faced too often in the past.

Carl Madden, chief economist
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

A capitalist is someone who derives a substantial share of his income from his equity in producing companies. On this scale the figures are discouraging. Approximately ninety percent of the capital of this country is owned by five or less percent of the American people.

Louis Kelso of San Francisco, a lawyer-economist, has for years felt that he has a radical answer to the problem.

William F. Buckley
Feb. 24, 1970

There is a conspicuous void in the arguments and the programs of the counter-culture groups of this country, in that they have produced no well-formulated economic theories.

Unfortunately and ironically, Lou Kelso, who has some very imaginative economic proposals, has been offering them for many years to the establishment, the dinosaur culture.

So either Kelso is a lousy salesman or the dinosaurs are convinced their own designs will see them through.

The Whole Earth Catalog
Spring 1970

Louis O. Kelso, possibly the only genuine revolutionary in the United States.

Berkeley Daily Gazette
July 16, 1971

Kelso's formula sounds like Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. The whole theory sounds crazy. But, then, one may recall, they said all that of Copernicus too.

James J. Kilpatrick
Jan. 20, 1972

Kelsoism is not accepted by modern scientific economics as a valid and fruitful analysis of the distribution of income but rather it is regarded as an amateurish and cranky fad.

Paul Samuelson
The San Juan Star
April 27, 1972

Like the emperor's clothes, it looks beautiful. But when you look closely, you find there's nothing there.

Sar Levitan, economist

Taxation has its limitations as a method of achieving better economic distribution since for this purpose it is essentially remedial. We must also take a positive approach by finding new ways to spread ownership of future capital growth more broadly in our society. This will be a fertile field for creative ideas and experimentation in the years ahead by both government and the private sector.

One such approach has been developed by Louis Kelso. Kelso makes a convincing argument that many of the deficiencies of our economic system could be alleviated if ways were found to broaden the ownership of the means of production.

John D. Rockefeller 3rd
The Second American Revolution (1973)

If a Little Capitalism Is Good, What's Wrong with a Lot?

Fred Harris, former Senator
A chapter title from
The New Populism (1973)

In America, the greatest, most famous capitalist country in the world, there are almost no capitalists. The largest majority, silent and noisy, are job sarfs, wage villeins. dependent on salaries for all the money they'll ever see.

The great, lazy, anti-Calvinist, hedonistic Kelsonian truth is that you can't get rich through labor because it doesn't produce enough wealth.

Kelso's idea won't solve all our problems; it can't possibly work out as nicely as Kelso thinks, but it can move us from this barren repetition of fifty-year-old disputes. There is no salvation either outside the Church or on this earth, but Kelso does bring a new way of looking, and if that isn't salvation it's at least an intermediary grace.

Nicholas von Hoffman
Esquire December 1973

If a country in which only a few men and women are citizens is politically unjust, the remedy is not to abolish citizenship but to make all men and women citizens. If an industrialized country in which only a few own all the capital is economically unjust, the remedy is not to abolish private capital but to make it possible for all to become owners of some of it.

Winnett Boyd, president
Arthur D. Little, Canada

Over one hundred years ago Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act. There was a wide distribution of land and they didn't confiscate anyone's already privately owned land. They did not take from those who owned to give to others who did not own. It set the pattern for the American capitalistic system. We need an Industrial Homestead Act.... it is time to formulate a plan to accelerate the economic growth and production at the same time we broaden the ownership of productive capital. The American dream has always been to have a piece of the action.

Ronald Reagan
July 20, 1974

The Kelso plan is a gentle, non-Robin Hoodish approach to the redistribution of wealth which his father Huey always preached.

Charles Bartlett
Arizona Republic, Mar. 24, 1975

Kelso: McLuhan of economics?

The Village Voice
April 28, 1975

One of the great things that ESOPs have going for them is that they are such a natural from a political viewpoint: Who in populist Washington, whether liberal or conservative, would knock the idea of spreading corporate ownership?

Forbes, May 1, 1975

Since the 1940s, a lawyer named Louis O. Kelso has haunted America's corporate corridors, spinning fables about the advantages of a fringe benefit known as an employee stock ownership plan - ESOP, for short.

Money, June 1975

The Kelso doctrine is the only economic doctrine introduced in generations that could become a plank in either the Democratic or Republican platform.

Barron's, July 21, 1975

Bring on those tired, labor-plagued, competition-weary companies and ESOP will breathe new life into them. They will find ESOP better than Getitol. It will revitalize what is wrong with capitalism. It will increase productivity. It will improve labor relations. It will promote economic justice. It will save the economic system. It will make our form of government and our concept of freedom prevail over those who don't agree with us.

Senator Russell B. Long
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
October 20, 1975

These plans (ESOPs) have been heralded as the basic solution for many of our economic ills. Specifically, one of our chief proponents who will be testifying today, has said the widespread adoption of ESOPs will accomplish the following objectives: the restoration and acceleration of economic growth to unprecedented levels; create legitimate full employment for two or three decades; and lay the foundation for arresting inflation.

I must confess that these are some claims. Certainly no one since I have been chairing this committee has come before us with any program that promises that much.

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
Chairman, Joint Economic Committee
ESOP Hearings, Dec. 11, 1975

Louis O. Kelso is an economic seer whose time may have come.

Milton Moskowitz
San Francisco Chronicle
May 24, 1975

No one is putting in an ESOP just to be a nice guy.

Pension consultant quoted in
New York Times, Nov. 5, 1975

Like the case for acupuncture, it sounds bizarre, even alarming - but a suspicion remains that there may be something to it.

Fortune, March, 1976

Some brokers are saying that the ESOP trend may be exercising as much influence on the future as the computer.

San Francisco Business
January, 1976

Kelso's plan is so radical that it is difficult to take seriously.

Fortune, March, 1976

Panaceas often have a way of turning into Pandora's boxes.

Business Week editorial
Mar. 8, 1976

The conservative but populist chairman of the Senate Finance Committee has become an evangelical disciple of Louis O. Kelso, a San Francisco attorney who has long championed various forms of 'worker capitalism.'


The most powerful defense of ESOP comes from Long, who waxes as fervent on the subject as Kelso.

Time, Oct. 4, 1976

As one member of this committee, Mr. Kelso, let me express my appreciation to you for the tremendous contribution that you have made and the pioneering work that you have done in the interest of employee stock ownership. We are, in many respects, holding these hearings here because of the work you have done in the area.

Senator Russell B. Long
Chairman, Senate Committee
on Finance
July 19, 1978

The APEX TRIANGLE Corporation


AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY
ENTERPRISE

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WELCOME

REW

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 1979

C1

By William Greider

A Radical Idea As Old As Lincoln

THE TIME has come, perhaps to ask the question modern liberalism has always ducked: Who owns America? Why is the wealth of this fantastic, egalitarian nation distributed so unjustly? Why must capital and its attendant political power be concentrated in the hands of the few while the masses have only a mortgage and, if they are lucky, a modest pension?

The questions themselves sound vaguely Marxist, which is one reason why welfare-state liberals have always ducked. Liberalism is defined and disciplined by its right-wing adversaries, whose red-baiting effectively scares off new ideas, even new questions. I could make an argument that the long march of liberal solutions to social injustice — tinkering with wage floors, moving cash from one group to another, propping up the poor and the weak, protecting the sick and the jobless from catastrophe — all these are evasions of the more fundamental questions about wealth and its gross maldistribution.

If liberal government could not do anything about the distribution of wealth, then it must concentrate on wages and particular benefits, propelling the welfare state deeper and

deeper into private economic chaos. Essentially, the federal government hands out coupons, little tickets that entitle qualified citizens to buy food at a supermarket, to occupy an apartment in a subsidized building, to buy medicine at the ghetto pharmacy, to pick up a little cash on the first of the month, to bill the Treasury for catastrophic illness.

No one who has talked to the recipients of these benefits or examined their actual condition can feel very satisfied with the results. Real pain and suffering, even hunger, truly are alleviated, but these people, still poor, have become prisoners of the government coupons.

The liberal imagination, knowing that real improvements in ordinary lives have flowed from the security programs, will insist on renewed dedication to the concept. If injustice persists, if some people still live in degradation while the rest of us live in royal luxury, then we must tinker with the coupons. Increase their cash value. Or invent new coupons for other items that these people cannot afford. Cars? Air conditioners? French bread?

Roughly speaking, this is the road American politics traveled to its present frustration. The liberal mindset, honorable and well-intentioned, cannot confront the natural limits that always will stand in its way. One cru-



cial boundary in the politics of redistributing cash is the private wage system. Nobody really believes Washington should give a nonworker coupons that are more generous than the wages earned by his neighbor, the worker.

The other limitation is less obvious but more harsh: As the welfare state created safety nets for the poor and the weak, other, stronger groups in society invented their own versions of coupons, serving their own needs, and sold them to the government. Price-support systems for farmers, tax loopholes and housing subsidies for the middle class, guaranteed markets for industrial sectors, guaranteed jobs for unions strong enough to demand them.

I could argue that, in the final bal-

ance, the welfare state cares best for the prosperous, not the poor. But the main point is that virtually everyone, every economic sector, now participates in the government transfer of cash from one pocket to another. Meanwhile, the fundamental injustice of concentrated wealth is not altered in the slightest.

WHO OWNS America? I am pleased to report that this question will be raised next winter when all conventional politicians are campaigning in the New Hampshire presidential primary. Not by a bunch of parlor imitators. Not by desperate liberals searching for jazy new rhetoric. The question will be raised by a strange lit-

tle group called the Ownership Campaign which, if one forced an ideological identity on this eclectic collection of individuals, probably would be called right of center.

The Ownership Campaign is an assortment of businessmen, government technocrats, old labor types, young idealists and blue-collar political neophytes. All of them came from different starting points to a shared conclusion: The welfare state fails ultimately to achieve justice; the government must intervene instead to create a broad distribution of capital wealth, stock ownership in the new productivity capacity of the future.

These inspired amateurs think this is the idea of the 1980s, since it did not become the idea of the 1970s. They see a way to renew industrial growth in America, to share the benefits of capitalism more equitably and to climb out of the cul-de-sac created by modern liberalism, the continuous elaboration of coupons. They believe labor should own capital as well as wages. They believe citizens will never derive economic security, not to mention independence, as long as their well-being depends on government decisions.

This is the voice of economic individualism — the old American dream of yeoman independence that was buried in the modern era of big government, big corporations. These people are tak-

ing the original impulses of the American experience and trying to graft them onto modern corporate capitalism. At the edges, there is a barbarous yelp of protest borrowed from Ayn Rand. The heart of the idea, including the approach to banking and credit, is as old as Jefferson and Jackson, more radical than any reform entertained by the New Deal.

To grasp the full historical flavor, forget about all of the modern subsidy programs created in the last 40 years. Think instead of the really radical coupons handed out by government in the 19th century — Lincoln's Homestead Act. Through the national government, vast wealth was distributed free to ordinary Americans, including new immigrants, regardless of birth or education or economic status. The wealth was land and it was given freely, with one crucial condition: The people had to make it productive.

The ownership guerrillas believe stock in new industrial capacity can be distributed similarly, setting interest rates for ventures that represent real growth — not the paper games of borrowing and buying. Unlike the Marxist systems of shared wealth, nothing would be taken from the rich. Nor would the new factory become a state-owned industry, as in Britain or France. Anyone who has ever tried to use a telephone in France knows the limits of state socialism.

THOSE WHO find single-issue politics nettlesome and disruptive

Greider is the editor of Outlook. His columns appear weekly.

may be especially aggravated by the Ownership Campaign. It is raising money to enter not one, but two candidates in the 1980 New Hampshire primary — a Republican and a Democrat who will campaign jointly, share advertising costs and generally try to make the other conventional candidates take them seriously.

Neither major party has the intellectual vitality to take the plunge on this idea, though either could claim it as consistent with its past. The Ownership Campaign may end up looking silly, but can count itself successful if the horde of presidential candidates begins stealing their material.

Hold the smug laughter, for now. Some folks out there already understand this ownership pitch. When the farmers took their tractors to the Federal Reserve Board, demanding 3 percent interest rates, they were responding to the credit arguments of Norman Kurland, chairman of the Ownership Campaign. Kurland knows little about politics but he is one of those brilliantly obsessed figures one encounters in Washington, a person who cares more about ideas than making a living. Kurland has been pushing stock-ownership plans for more than a decade, undaunted by his limited success. He is the rarest combination — a creature who understands the banking laws yet continues to believe in the possibility of economic justice.

His political director is 25-year-old Luis Granados, a newly graduated law-

yer from Takoma Park, who knows the operations of a political campaign from serving local candidates but who lacks the jaded amorality of experienced operatives. Granados learned economics from ordinary experience:

"I grew up middle class," he said. "I got a scholarship to a fancy prep school and I saw that end. Then I saw the other end, campaigning in poor neighborhoods. I just think the distribution of wealth is wrong. There's not sufficient difference in people to justify the differences in wealth."

This observation matches my own experiences as a reporter. Over the years, I have had many encounters with people on the bottom rung of our society — white mountaineers, black youths in the cities, migrant workers, poor people urban and rural. I always come away with a chilly feeling, a fresh recognition that most poor people could perform just as well as the rest of us, if they had gotten a few lucky rolls of the dice.

Others in the Ownership Campaign are not exactly bleeding hearts. They include Tim Maloney, a young new state legislator from Prince George's County; Anthony M. Carey, partner in a high-toned Baltimore law firm; Joe Rourke, a retired Massachusetts labor leader, and Wally Johnson, a former Republican mayor of Berkeley, Calif., who runs an aluminum scaffolding company called Up Right Inc.

Johnson is the only one with experience in a presidential primary. He received 35,000 votes in New Hampshire

in 1978, running for vice president in the GOP primary on a single issue opposing congressional pay raises. This was 12,000 votes more than Jimmy Carter got in New Hampshire, but the press ignored Wally Johnson because he was not deemed to be serious.



SERIOUS political people will be hostile to this idea. They will endorse the rhetoric of broadened ownership because it sounds like Mom and apple pie, but the major power centers of American politics feel threatened by the idea of actually distributing capital ownership to everyone.

Organized labor sees it as compromising the hard and clean lines of worker-management bargaining. Corporate management distrusts it as an ultimate threat to its own control of corporate behavior. Technocrats devoted to managing the welfare state do not wish for its demise. No-growth environmentalists do want a new industrial boom for this country. Status-conscious conservatives are offended by the egalitarian premise.

Listen carefully to their objections. These people have impressive arguments on why this scheme will not work or why it should not be tried. Listen, then ask yourself what these experts would have told Lincoln about his crazy plan for homesteading.

Ownership History

...That the inhabitants of the English colonies in North America, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following RIGHTS:

Resolved ... That they are entitled to life, liberty and property: and they have never ceded to any foreign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent.

-Declaration and Resolves of the
First Continental Congress-,
October 14, 1774

"The control over a man's subsistence amounts to a control over his will."

-Alexander Hamilton-

...That all Men are by Nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent Rights, of which, when they enter into a State of Society, they cannot by an Compact, deprive or divest their Posterity; namely, the Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, and the Means of acquiring and possessing Property, and pursuing and obtaining Happiness and Safety.

-Virginia Declaration of Rights-
June 12, 1776

...We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;...

-Declaration of Independence-
July 4th, 1776

All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; that of acquiring, possessing and protecting property; in fine, that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness.

- Massachusetts Declaration of
Rights -
October 25, 1780

Article V. No person shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

-Bill of Rights-
December 15, 1791

Private property is a creature of society, and is subject to the calls of that society, whenever its necessities shall require it...

-Benjamin Franklin, 1783-

Law is a very good thing for men with property and a very bad thing for men without property.

-Rousseau, Social Contract-

The nations of our time cannot prevent the conditions of men from becoming equal; but it depends upon themselves whether the principle of equality is to lead them to servitude or freedom.

-de Tocqueville-

final comment in Democracy in America

Tenantry is unfavorable to freedom. It lays the foundation for separate orders in society, annihilates the love of country, and weakens the spirit of independence. The tenant has in fact no country, no hearth, no domestic altar, no household god. The freeholder, on the contrary, is the natural supporter of a free government, and it should be the policy of republics to multiply their freeholders, as it is the policy of nonarchies to multiply tenants.

-Thomas Hart Benton-

Jefferson, though the secret vote was still unknown at the time had at least a foreboding of how dangerous it might be to allow the people to share a public power without providing them at the same time with more public space than the ballot box and with more opportunity to make their voices heard in public than on election day. What he perceived to be the mortal danger to the republic was that the Constitution had given all power to the citizens, without giving them the opportunity of being citizens and of acting as citizens.

-Hannah Arendt-

in On Revolution

...if you believe in democracy...distribute property as widely as possible.

-Aldous Huxley-

...In Harlem, for instance, all of the stores are owned by white people, all of the buildings are owned by white people. The black people are just there paying rent, buying the groceries; but they don't own the stores, clothing stores, food stores, any kind of stores; don't even own the homes they live in. They are all owned by outsiders, ...

"When the thing is finally sparked, the white man is not there-he's gone. The merchant is not there, the landlord is not there, the one they consider to be the enemy isn't there. So, they knock at his property. This is what makes them knock down the store windows and set fire to things, and things of that sort.

-Malcom X-

Government has the responsibility to provide the climate in which Americans, all Americans, have an opportunity for good jobs; and not only for good jobs, but an opportunity if they have the ability and the desire, to be owners and managers, to have a piece of the action, because if they have a piece of the action, then they believe in the system rather than fighting against it.

-Richard Nixon-

Property performs the function of maintaining independence, dignity and pluralism in society by creating zones within which the majority has to yield to the owner. Whim, caprice, irrationality and 'antisocial' activities are given the protection of law; the owner may do what all or most of his neighbors decry. The Bill of Rights also serves this function, but while the Bill of Rights comes into play only at extraordinary moments of conflict or crisis, property affords day-to-day protection in the ordinary affairs of life. Indeed, in the final analysis the Bill of Rights depends upon the existence of private property.

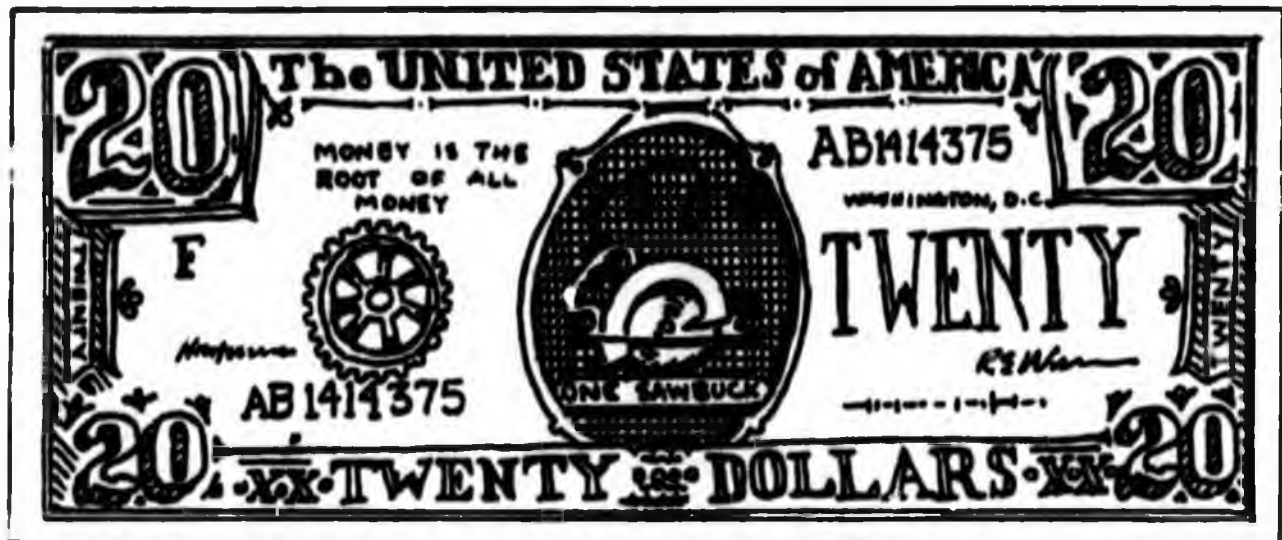
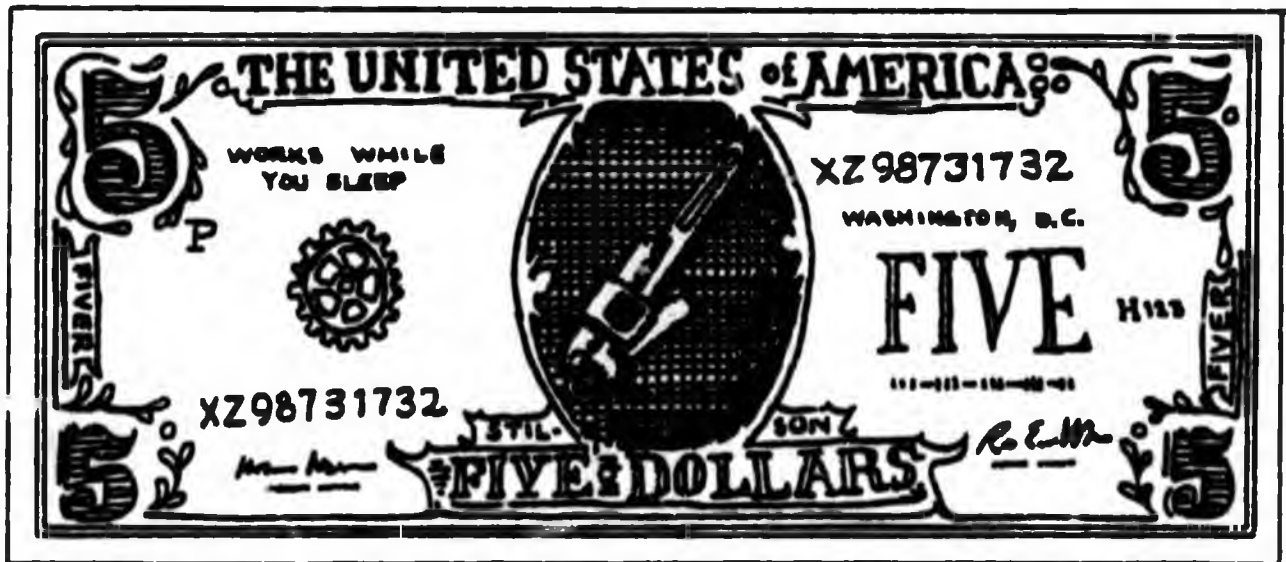
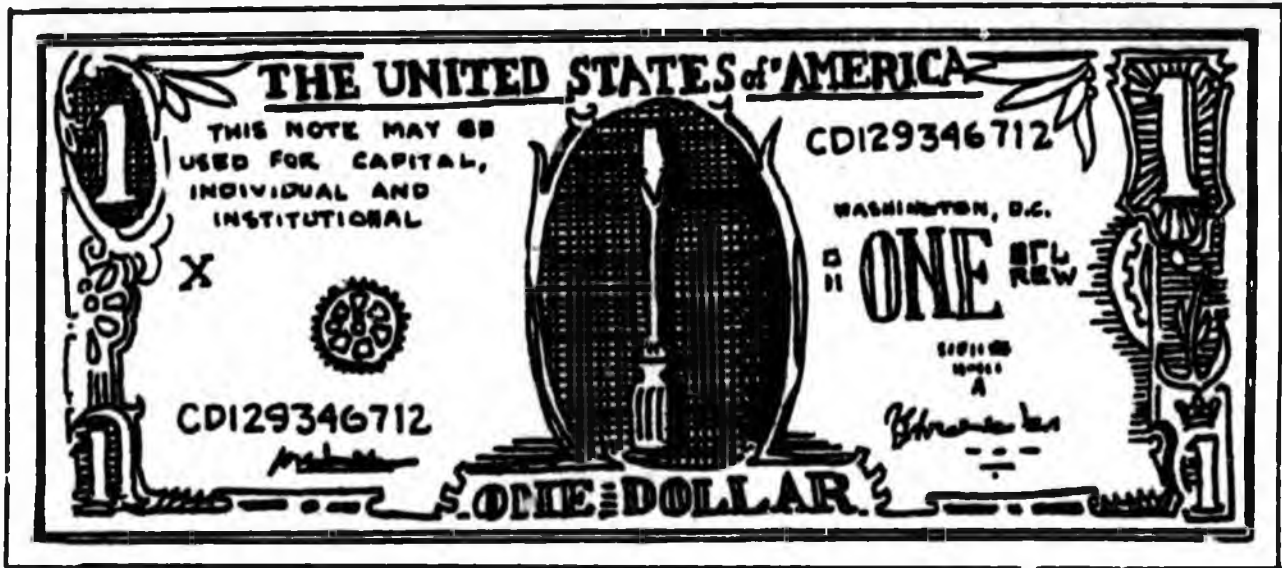
-Charles A. Reich-

Profit sharing in the form of stock distributions to workers would help to democratize the ownership of America's vast corporate wealth which is today appallingly undemocratic and unhealthy.

-Walter P. Reuther-
President, United Auto Workers

"...democracy is a method of finding proximate solutions for insoluble problems."

-Reinhold Niebuhr-



Share the Wealth

During three years in power, a socialist government succeeded in nationalizing or buying into a number of British Columbia's natural-resource companies. But in 1975, exasperated voters of Canada's third-largest province threw the socialist premier out and elected William R. Bennett, the millionaire son of a previous B.C. premier. A champion of free enterprise, Bennett, 46, has found a way to undo part of the socialists' work. Every one of the province's 2.4 million residents will be offered five shares of British Columbia Resources Investment Corp., a holding company set up by the government.

B.C. Resources owns 81 percent of Canadian Cellulose, a \$153-million forest-products firm, and 10 percent of Westcoast Transmission Co. (1977 sales: \$735 million), which operates a natural-gas pipeline. B.C. Resources also has two wholly owned forest-products companies, and valuable oil- and gas-exploration rights on some 23 million acres.

Under Bennett's plan, 80 percent of the stock—some 12 million shares—will be distributed to every man, woman, and child who has lived in the province in the last year and is a Canadian citizen. They will also be eligible to buy more stock—up to 5,000 shares—at a discount. Each share of B.C. Resources has a book value of \$10, and the company will be listed on the Vancouver Stock Exchange. "We live in a rich province," says the premier. "Now my government wants to give the people the opportunity to share these riches."

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1978

Alaska Inc.: An Economic Experiment

Senator's Plan Would Distribute State's New Wealth to Citizens

By William Greider

Washington Post Staff Writer

Alaska, a state where pioneering is still a daily reality, wants to launch a grand experiment in economic democracy—distributing new wealth to all its citizens, giving each an owner's share in Alaska's bountiful energy development.

If the scheme works, every Alaskan—men, women, children—will hold stock shares in huge capital investments such as the Trans-Alaskan oil pipeline or the proposed natural gas pipeline or a future petrochemical complex. Every year, citizens would each receive dividend checks of several hundred dollars or more and, every year, their share of equity interest would grow.

In addition to spreading cash among the citizens, the idea might produce political benefits for the oil companies. If people have a personal stake in the profits, the public may be more sympathetic when private enterprise complains about government regulation and taxation.

Is the capitalist revolution upon us?

The "general stock ownership plan" (GSOP) is the brainchild of Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska), who derived the idea from the economic philosophy of Louis Kelso, a prophet of broadened capital ownership for workers. Last week, without any fanfare, the federal tax-law changes necessary for the venture were enacted by Congress in its omnibus tax bill, now awaiting the president's signature.

"This idea has floated around for years and nobody has taken it seriously," Gravel said. "But wait until the day when the first dividend checks go out to every citizen of Alaska. When the long green touches their hands, you will see a revolution begin."

Gravel, his enthusiasm getting somewhat ahead of events, predicts the Alaskan venture will alter American politics and economics in profound ways, as other states rush to copy the model. The senator sells it as the alternative to welfare-state liberalism, as the way "to build a constituency for capitalism."

The potential political effects are almost as intriguing as the presumed economic benefits. Gravel's plan would make all citizens into minority partners with the major oil companies, a fact that could greatly alter public opinion on issues such as state taxation of energy ventures. If a citizen holds a personal stake in energy profits, albeit a small one, he or she may not like the idea of the state government increasing its taxes on those profits in order to finance public programs.

In the meantime, the state government of Alaska has not yet committed itself to do anything beyond studying the idea.

The legislature has placed Louis Kelso's San Francisco investment firm under a \$180,000 contract to draw up the blueprint for this economic creature—a state-chartered corporation owned by everyone, empowered to borrow money, perhaps with a credit guarantee from the state, and to invest the money in private business ventures. Earnings from the venture would pay off the loan and the leftover profits would be distributed every year as dividends to each of the 405,000 citizen stockholders.

For starters, Gravel thinks the GSOP corporation might buy out British Petroleum's 16 percent share in the oil pipeline. Owned jointly by eight oil companies, the pipeline is already carrying North Slope crude oil south for distribution. BP has expressed an interest in selling its investment, valued at \$1.5 billion, and the senator's staff calculates that, when the pipeline is at full capacity, BP's share of the revenue would run about \$406 million a year.

This would be enough for the GSOP corporation, according to Gravel, to cover the operating costs plus the annual debt payments and still leave about \$158 million a year for distribution in dividends.

That means about \$390 per person. Nobody will get rich on \$390, but a family of four would have four dividend checks coming every year, or \$1,560. This could make a real difference to a poor family, Gravel reasons, offsetting some of the government obligations to provide welfare and subsidized services.

Since the value of an oil pipeline depreciates as it ages, the citizen stock would presumably be worth considerably less than \$1.5 billion when the debt is finally paid off in 15 or 20 years. After five years, however, a citizen could sell his or her share for the going price.

To avoid concentrated ownership, nobody could hold more than 10 shares.

Each share of stock would have a single vote to elect the officers of the GSOP corporation, who in turn would have 16 percent worth of influence over the pipeline company itself.

Among other things, the Alaska legislature has to decide who qualifies as a "citizen." One idea is to set a cutoff date of Jan. 1 this year, so the state would not be flooded with new immigrants seeking a share of stock.

Down the road a way, Gravel envisions several layers of citizen investment on a grander scale—another stock issue to help finance the multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline expected to be built in the 1980s, another to share in a vast petrochemical complex envisioned for the Kenai Peninsula. If Gravel's wish list were to become reality over the next decade, Alaskans would be drawing modest second incomes in addition to their wages—a collection of dividend checks.

At this point, the reader of normal intelligence is probably rolling his eyes and wondering if Sen. Gravel and the Alaska legislature have gone bonkers, not to mention the U.S. Congress, which has authorized the experiment. It all sounds too good to be true. Where is the hidden catch? And who pays the bill for this redistribution of wealth?

That is approximately the reaction that Gravel encountered last March when he first proposed the scheme to the state legislature and, again, this summer when he tried it out on the Senate Finance Committee. With a little persuasion from Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.), the committee chairman and an advocate himself of broadened ownership, the Congress decided to let Gravel try out his mini-revolution.

Long has said privately that, if Gravel's idea works, and it may or may not, it would become the most significant item in the 1978 tax legislation.

The heart of the scheme is credit, the power to borrow money. As Gravel and Kelso see the world, ordinary people, even poor people, could accumulate wealth in the same way that well-to-do people make their assets grow, if the government will intervene. A person who has sufficient assets or earnings to guarantee his or her credit can borrow money to make investments, pledging to pay back the loan with the new income expected from the investments.

If the venture is a success, the person winds up with new capital that paid for itself, but nobody calls this process a "giveaway." It's called "risk-taking" in the free enterprise system.

Gravel's notion is that government, which in effect aggregates the assets of all citizens, can provide a mechanism for extending a share of credit to everyone—a chance to buy something based on its anticipated future earnings.

That concept is the essential novelty of Gravel's scheme. Beyond that point, the proposition works more or less like ordinary business transactions, with the same tax benefits, the same risks. The citizen-owned corporation would enjoy the same tax treatment as a partnership or a certain corporation with a limited number of stockholders (known as "Subchapter S" Corporations). The GSOP would be exempt from paying corporate income tax on its own earnings, but it would have to distribute at least 90 percent of its profits every year to shareholders who would each pay individual income tax on the money. The GSOP could not, however, pass through losses, so its shareholders could not use it as a tax shelter.

The Treasury Department objected to Gravel's original version because he had tucked in additional, more exotic "tax benefits." When the tax experts studied his final proposal, however, they concluded that the U.S. Treasury would lose little or nothing.

Gravel contends the federal government will actually collect more revenue under his plan because the profits now collected by British Petroleum, for instance, are "sheltered" from taxation by various provisions of the tax code. If some of that profit goes directly to individuals, it could yield as much as \$40 million in income taxes, Gravel claims.

If the GSOP decided to buy BP's share, it would have to go to a friendly banker somewhere, presumably on Wall Street, and ask to borrow the \$1.5 billion needed. The banker would make a calculation on whether it is a good risk. If not, the banker would look as if it wouldn't "pay out" as handsomely as he or she wants to protect himself. The banker would be turned down or be forced to pay high-risk interest rates that might kill the whole idea.

But, if the Plans Alaskan pipeline

is such a good deal, how come British Petroleum wants to get out of it? That question leads into arcane subjects where only experts tread with confidence—pipeline economics, corporate debt structure and optimum rates of return for oil companies.

British Petroleum, which has expressed no more than an informal interest in selling, has complained about its low earnings from the pipeline so far, which suffered from an explosion and shutdown last year. It is the only major partner that doesn't also own a share of the North Slope oil field. The state of Alaska, like Exxon and Arco and the others, does own production shares in the oil field.

"If you own a share of the oil field," said John Gore, BP's Washington representative, "it's economic to own a share of the pipeline. If you don't hold a share of the oil field, it doesn't look so good."

BP has one of the highest debt-equity ratios among petroleum majors and some think the company would like to extract its investment from the Alaskan pipeline so it can spend the money closer to home—drilling more oil wells in Britain's North Sea fields.

In any case, one reason the pipeline looks less attractive to the British company today is that the state government of Alaska has been fighting the oil companies over how much the pipeline can charge to move the crude oil. The state collects a severance tax on all oil pumped in Alaska, but transportation costs are deducted from the tax—so a higher pipeline fee means less tax revenue for the state government and vice versa.

This is a political hook that could have important implications for the future development of energy projects.

Right now, the oil companies are asking federal regulators for a pipeline tariff of \$635 per barrel, while state tax officials insist that a fee of \$168 is all that can be justified. For the state treasury, the difference represents about \$1 million a year in severance tax revenue. But, if Alaskan citizens owned BP's share, the higher tariff would deliver an additional \$106 million to their citizen-owned corporation.

Question: Would Alaskans prefer a lower tariff that sends more tax money to the state capital or a higher tariff that adds more money to their own dividend checks? The political message from the citizens could very well be: Get off the backs of the oil companies.

Sen. Gravel claims this possibility is one of the major benefits of his proposal. "You set in motion a conflict between the citizens and the government," he said, "and you give the citizen a handle for seeing what the government is doing."

Alaska Revenue Commissioner Sterling Gallagher, originally skeptical about Gravel's proposal because of its tax implications, is now a supporter. He agrees this political tension is likely, but he sees that as healthy. In any case, Gallagher doesn't think the GSOP would go forward with the

pipeline purchase until the tariff issue is settled conclusively by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"It's hard for people to tell what government is doing for them," Gallagher said. "If there is wealth in the state — public wealth — I think we should distribute it to the people and let them decide how to use it."

Citizen ownership, in Gravel's argument, is an alternative to state socialism—a way to distribute the benefits of corporate capitalism without nationalizing private enterprises and turning over their management to politicians and bureaucrats. For several years, Alaska has been contemplating whether the state government should acquire shares of the new energy venture, so Gravel sees the GSOP approach as an alternative to state ownership.

Construction of the huge natural gas pipeline, for instance, still depends upon raising the capital, and some industry officials believe it can't be done without government participation of some kind, either direct investment or by loan guarantees.

If government is going to share in the risk-taking, Gravel thinks it makes more sense to pass on the benefits to individual citizens, rather than the public treasury.

In many ways, Alaska is a unique laboratory for this idea. It has a very small population and a promising, undeveloped future. But Gravel and Gallagher, among others, think the GSOP model can be widely copied in other states—as provided by the tax legislation — and applied to certain types of ventures seeking new capital, such as natural resource projects or public utilities.

Gravel likes to suggest that Potomac Electric Power Co., which sells electricity to metropolitan Washington, could be forced to obtain its new capital from a corporation owned by all of Pepeco's customers, from the very poor to the very rich. Nobody would make a fortune, but it would take a little of the pain out of rate increases.

Despite Gravel's probusiness rhetoric, some conservatives are still offended by the idea of "giving" equity to people who haven't paid anything for it. In the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. John Danforth (R-Mo.) asked how he could explain this to his constituents, and Gravel responded rather tartly, considering that Danforth is an heir to the Halston-Purina fortune.

"Here is how you explain it to the people of Missouri," Gravel replied.

"You say, if you are a citizen of Missouri and you inherited \$10 million, you are well off and you got it for nothing and that is okay in our capitalist society . . . so we are going to fix it so that you can do like the wealthy people—go borrow money on your net worth and take that money and put it into something and let that simply pay the cost of the loan and then pay you wealth thereafter. I told the people of Missouri would jump up in the air and say, 'Hosanna! Somebody finally is letting us have a piece of the action.'"

THE FOLLOWING PAGES WERE TREATED AS
A UNIT IN THE ORIGINAL FILE.

Alaska State Legislature

Libertarian
Representative
RICHARD (DICK) L. RANDOLPH
1105 Cushman St.
Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701



While in Juneau
POUCH V
Juneau, Alaska
99801

House of Representatives

Dear concerned Alaskans,

Senator Gravel is energetically promoting his AGSOC proposal. In typical Gravel fashion he is employing every technique of professional "con-ism" available. Please do not swallow his big lie. AGSOC is not free enterprise! It is not capitalism of any kind! It is complete and total collectivism and it must be stopped!! I can appreciate the appeal of something-for-nothing "professta-tions," but it's full of holes, it won't work, and it will commit at least one and maybe many generations of Alaskans to its cruel hoax.

Gravel's altar-ego, Louis O. Kelso, has been promoting this "economic idiocy" for over 20 years and in Gravel he has finally found a politician who is politically oriented enough to promote it. It is a scheme completely void of any redeeming values to a free society.

I appreciate that this is a harsh indictment, but one which is completely defensible. I will, between now and however long it takes to expose and defeat this sham, provide information and leadership to those who agree with this indictment.

To begin with, it is important that we understand Kelso's so-called "economic theories" from which AGSOC is derived. Toward that understanding I have enclosed two critiques of his book, The New Capitalists.

The first critique was recently produced by Robert Shelley, a life-long Alaskan, attorney, and presently my administrative aide in Juneau. Bob does an excellent job of tying Kelso, Gravel and AGSOC together and pointing out their fallacies.

Percy L. Greaves, a free-market economist, in his critical analysis of this work comments: "This small book contains more economic fallacies than it does pages. The basic assumptions upon which it is built cannot withstand the light of careful scrutiny. Furthermore, the alleged facts are not documented and the logic employed is extremely loose. Its strong effect on the casual reader rests largely upon the repeated assertion of seemingly plausible statements

AGSOC
Page 2

which, upon close analysis turn out to mean almost the exact opposite of what they first seemed to say.

Any attempt to put the book's proposals into effect would immediately reduce the incentive to produce and result in a rapid paring down of the American standard of living. At the same time, it would set up an economic dictatorship which would select the management of the nation's industries and determine all production goals. In short, it is an unwitting blueprint for the establishment of a Socialist America."

Please carefully read both, and then compare the AGSOC proposal in detail against this background. I am convinced that anyone who understands and believes in true free enterprise and capitalism will agree that this sham does not qualify in any aspect!

I would not dignify this proposal with a response if it were not apparent that many fine and normally right-thinking Alaskans are being drawn in by the insidious lure of this bankrupt proposal.'

It is my commitment to provide a well studied, articulate defense of the free market as opposed to this vicious, fraudulent misrepresentation of the facts! I am absolutely convinced that the adoption of the AGSOC proposal would have the most negative economic and social impact on the traditional Alaskan lifestyle conceivable.

I sincerely and emphatically request that you study the enclosed material and the other information which I will provide you from time to time. If you agree and want to help, let me know. Together we can expose and defeat this fraud and save 450,000 Alaskans from inadvertently creating a socialist Alaska!!

Freedom is the issue,



Dick Randolph
Alaska's Libertarian Legislator

AGSOC -- A FOOL'S PARADISE

prepared for

Representative Dick Randolph (L)

by

Robert Reed Shelley

AGSOC - A FOOL'S PARADISE
by
Robert Reed Shelley

In order to understand the meaning of the Alaska General Stock Ownership proposal presently before the legislature and the people of Alaska, it is necessary to become more familiar with the philosophy of its creator and to test some of the premises upon which its foundation is built.

Certainly any discriminating thinker who has encountered the AGSOC concept has realized that there must be more to the proposal than meets the eye. This is primarily because rarely in human experience does one get something for nothing. Try to picture Senator Gravel performing his political song and dance version of Jiminy Cricket's "Oh the World Owes Me a Living" on the Gong Show. Then compare The Sound of Music in which Julie Andrews sings, "Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could." Which one would you believe?

The creator of this attractive sounding 'horn of plenty' is a man named Louis O. Kelso who, along with myself, has combined the two professions of which the discriminating thinker is most skeptical, Economist and Lawyer, to form his background. From that point on, however, Mr. Kelso and I seem to diverge in our approach to human nature and the application of human nature to the economics of man.

Among Mr. Kelso's publications are two books with rather deceiving titles. The first in order is one entitled The Capitalist Manifesto, and its sequel is one called The New Capitalists. This paper is primarily con-

cerned with The New Capitalists, with references made therein to The Capitalist Manifesto. It's the inclusion of the term 'capitalist' which makes these titles so deceiving. Upon close scrutiny it is clear that Mr. Kelso is to capitalism what Benedict Arnold was to the American revolution.

Webster's Dictionary (1979 Ed) defines 'capitalism' as: "the form of economic, industrial, and social organization of society involving ownership, control, and direction of production by privately owned business organizations" (as opposed to the government) In other words, capitalism means free enterprise without government interference in the economy. Mr. Kelso, on the other hand, has the audacity to try to pawn off his plan for governmental direction of the economy to unsuspecting readers as 'capitalism.' If he and Senator Gravel (Kelso's political promoter) are successful, they should be named the flim-flam men of the century.

Basically, Mr. Kelso sees only two factors in production: 1) Physical labor and 2) Capital goods (those goods which produce other goods). It is his contention that capital produces 90 percent of the gross national product in our economy, and that all but a small fraction of the capital instruments are owned by 5 percent of the households of the economy. In addition, he claims that despite this "concentration of ownership of capital, "70 percent of income produced is distributed through labor.

It is important to critically examine these contentions because they are the basic assumptions upon which his entire theory rests.

Any reasonably astute person knows that the initial factor in any kind of production is an 'idea.' While ideas are not exactly physical labor, they are essential to production. When physical labor and capital are added

to ideas, we may have production. Mr. Kelso seems to practically ignore ideas as the factor of production which is uniquely human. Instead, he classifies the factors of production into physical labor (his "human" factor) and capital (his "nonhuman" factor). One might wonder how capital can be termed "nonhuman" since it is only by human conception, creation, and operation that capital exists.

At any rate, contrary to Kelso's views, each factor of production is not mutually exclusive. Neither ideas, physical labor, nor capital can produce anything by itself. It is ludicrous to attempt to determine what percentage of any finished product was the result of the idea, the physical labor, or the capital goods used to produce it. We could argue forever as to how much of the production of the Wright Brothers' first plane at Kitty Hawk was the result of their idea, their physical labor, or their capital. For each item of capital produced, it takes ideas and labor to put it together, to operate it and to maintain it. Then, once the capital produces something, it takes ideas and labor to distribute and market the product. Mr. Kelso has conveniently determined, in an effort to support his theories, that 'capital' is responsible for 90% of all production. So much for the first of Mr. Kelso's premises.

Next, Mr. Kelso claims that this 'capital' is almost totally owned by only 5% of the households in America. While it is undoubtedly true that some Americans own more capital than others, Mr. Kelso's estimate is obviously misleading. The number of stockholders of publicly held corporations listed on the New York Stock Exchange now exceeds 20 million, or one out of every six adults in the United States. In addition, Kelso seems to ignore the multitude of privately owned closed corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships, house ownership, real

estate holdings, life insurance and other forms of capital. The most important point to make is that a large extent of what capital concentration does exist in the United States is the result of government control of the economy, which results in political rather than economic allocation of available resources. In other words, through subsidies, regulation, and huge government spending, government, through politics, helps some wealthy people to unjustly remain wealthy and even become wealthier. In any case, it is the divergence in wealth between people in a free society that has given the world its highest standard of living and which makes life interesting. It is the opportunity to better one's well-being that stimulates all production. The extent of that opportunity should not be limited. Variance in wealth should not be disdained in itself as Mr. Kelso seems to do.

The third 'statistic' which Mr. Kelso uses to further his plans is that 70% of all income produced is distributed through labor. While one might be able to come up with such an estimate, careful thinking would certainly question the accuracy of such a figure. For instance, is the board member of a large corporation really earning \$500,000 worth of labor in his salary, or is this a payment in lieu of dividends which could be taxed as high as 70%, whereas earned income has a 50% maximum tax rate? Even assuming Kelso's 70% of all income being distributed through labor, one could argue that this refutes his previous assumption

that capital produces 90% of all production, since one would assume that each factor would be rewarded in relation to its worth. Kelso, however, argues that this disparity between 10% of production being caused by labor and 70% of income being distributed to it proves that American labor is composed of primarily lazy people who just take up space and time but don't really produce anything. Kelso says that unemployment in a capitalist system is both desirable and inevitable. He supposes that soon machinery will do everything and humans will do nothing. This concept is so naive that it barely rates refuting. While it is true that capital equipment may eventually produce more products which were produced previously by labor, so far no machine can replace man's unique ability to reason and create new ideas. In addition, it will always take human physical labor to get the resources, to build the new capital equipment, to operate it, to maintain it and to distribute the product which it produces. In addition, it will be a long time before machines totally replace humans in the service industries. Perhaps technology has allowed mankind to concentrate on mental labor rather than physical labor, but even physical labor will never be totally eliminated. Kelso says his plan would cast out the irrational doctrine of full employment, indicating the people wouldn't have to work. As he says, "unemployment is natural and desirable in a technically advanced economy." Until human needs are totally satisfied, there will always be a demand for new and better products at a lower price, and this will keep most of us employed (if we so choose) through the next major evolution of man.

From these "statistics" as to production and the distribution of income, Mr. Kelso comes up with some incredible conclusions and recommendations.

One such conclusion is that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Mr. Kelso reasons that since "labor is being replaced by capital as the total factor of production," soon those who currently own capital will be the only ones who will survive economically. He further argues that it's nearly impossible to accumulate capital unless you already have capital. This, he says, is causing an increasing concentration of wealth in the country. Then Kelso wonders what these wealthy capitalists do with all of their extra capital. He comes to the conclusion that they just make themselves wealthier by re-investing it, with no benefit to anyone else. This is a distorted conclusion indeed. Because when that 'extra' capital is reinvested, many people become employed, and we can assume that somebody's need will be fulfilled if the product sells. On top of that, it is true capitalist economic theory to believe that because of the increased supply of products on the market, the added competition by the new business venture, and the added growth to the wealth of the economy, both the particular price of that product and the general price level of the economy would fall to some extent. In turn, this lowering of prices and increased availability of goods on the market make almost everyone else in the economy better off (wealthier). It is clear, then, that Mr. Kelso's conclusion should have been that the rich get richer (assuming they make productive investments) and so do the poor. Everyone is made better off by the reinvestment of the capital which the wealthy man did not consume himself.

What's wrong with some rich people getting richer in relation to some poor people? In my view, nothing. In Mr. Kelso's view, however, it is somehow unfair, and he claims it will soon lead to socialism since the relatively less rich will use government to control the economy, and redistribute the wealth. The incredible inconsistency

in Mr. Kelso's thinking occurs when in the next breath he suggests the creation of a new governmental agency that would virtually take over the banking system and control the entire economy. This he calls the Capital Diffusion Insurance Corporation (CDIC).

Although Kelso doesn't like his plan to be associated with the redistribution of wealth, he believes that the government needs to take an active role in redistributing wealth so that there are many little "capitalists" rather than just a few. It shows his lack of understanding of capitalism that he should use the concepts of redistribution of wealth and capitalism in the same breath. In addition, Kelso defines a capitalist as "a member of a household which derives not less than half the amount the household spends on consumption from the ownership of capital." Under this definition, Leonid Breznev would be one of the biggest capitalists in the world (although he steals it) and an average American with a business, a house, a retirement system, and a small portfolio of common stock probably would not qualify (although he probably earned it honestly). Of course, when this average American retires and lives off the return on his investment rather than labor related income, he can suddenly call himself a capitalist even though he might be virtually nothing.

Kelso says government's objective should be to make sure that technological unemployment falls on those who can afford it (the wealthy). Does he actually advocate government retirement of successful people so that others can take their place?

The Capital Diffusion Insurance Corporation (CDIC) is the governmental mechanism by which Kelso plans to "create" lots of little "capitalists" out of nothing. In Kelso's view, the only thing that is preventing more

little "capitalists" from popping up is the present free market system of capital formation financing. Under the current system, someone who doesn't own capital can only get it in one of two ways: 1) forego consumption and accumulate savings (capital), or 2) find someone who will lend you money (capital) so that you can reinvest it and make a higher return. Kelso argues that most people can't afford to forego consumption so as to accumulate capital, and that this wouldn't be good anyway because it would cause a decrease in the demand for consumer goods and the economy would collapse. Again, Kelso fails to see that as the economy expands because of capital investment, the entire populace benefits due to more and better products at lower prices. If the average American of today was compared to the average American of 100 years ago, there is little doubt that today's subject is much better off economically than yesterday's. As the man of today rises higher and higher above a subsistence living, he ends up having more wealth to spend on both consumption and capital investment, thereby both keeping up the demand in the economy and giving himself more opportunity to own capital. Again, Kelso leaves out the Human idea factor of production. He almost assumes that an investment is just an investment. The truth is that a man with a big idea and little capital can make more wealth than a man with a small idea and lots of capital. Therefore, Kelso's view that there is no upward mobility in our society and that one can only acquire capital if he already has capital, is not entirely correct.

Kelso astutely observes that those lending capital to others want some insurance that they will be repaid. Under the current system of financing, this means that the lender will want collateral in the form of a claim upon the currently held assets of the borrower. Kelso claims those without currently held capital will then not

be able to get a loan to acquire their own capital. He fails to see that at some point all of us must forego some consumption (save) in order to borrow to accumulate capital. (Unless it's given to us, of course.)

In order to provide those who lack collateral with capital-producing potential, Kelso's CDIC would guarantee, in the name of the government, loans by commercial banks to borrowers who would otherwise be poor credit risks. These loans would not even provide for the personal liability of the borrower. Responsibility is totally removed for the borrower. Kelso compares his plan to the federal FHA program, which is noted for its bankrupt failings.

By the government becoming involved in capital financing, all of us, including those who make successful investments, would be paying for the mistakes of those who didn't deserve a guarantee in the first place and who would go belly up in their investment. There are only two ways the government could pay off such guarantees. 1) raise taxes on everyone else; or 2) start up the printing presses and pay the claims off in phony dollars thereby feeding fuel to inflation. Neither method is fair or honest.

But the fact that such a government program is not fair because it would force innocent people to pay for others' mistakes is only a small part of the real evils that such a scheme would create. In describing CDIC still further, Kelso discusses what 'policy' factors should go into the manner in which CDIC decides who should get the guarantee and in what business ventures these borrowers should be able to invest.

Included in these proposed policies are the following:

1. Anti-Monopoly Policy: This would be left to the political whim of bureaucrats who would likely insure through government power that the rich and powerful were well protected. Still Kelso calls

his plan capitalism.

2. Promotion of technological improvement policy: There could be no more detrimental effect on technological change than to misallocate resources for such change by political (government) means rather than by the free market. Leave it to competition! Still Kelso writes of capitalism?
3. Increase the number of capital owning households policy: This basically means redistribution of wealth by transferring opportunity and risk from those who deserve it to those who don't. The New Capitalists?
4. Investment preferences for new capital estates policy: Another form of the redistribution of wealth. Capitalist?
5. Prevention of speculation in stocks policy: Let's say goodbye to the New York Stock Exchange. Kelso fails to see that stock speculation is the incentive for persons to first put money into a proposed development. He still refers to his plan as capitalist!
6. Coordination of consumer demand and new capital formation policy: This is plain and simply a planned economy proposal. Kelso the capitalist?
7. Inflation control and reduction of consumer credit policy: There are several reasons why Kelso's plan would in fact be inflationary. First, the misallocation of resources from the free market to borrowers with a poor credit risk will adversely affect economic expansion while the money supply either remains constant or expands. Second, it is likely that the government would honor guarantees made by CDIC by printing dollars (a hidden tax) rather than by raising actual taxes.

Additionally, once the government, through CDIC has guaranteed a major portion of outstanding loans

in the economy, it will have even a more vested interest in promoting inflation as a way to make the loans easier to repay.

8. Personal aptitudes and education requirements policy:

This is perhaps the most appalling of the powers Kelso wants to place in government hands. Under this policy, a bureaucrat would direct the economy by giving preferences on loans to only those with a particular level of education or background. This would be a very hard part of Kelso's planned economy to swallow. I can just see a father telling his son that he must become an artist in order to get started in the world because that's what the CDIC decided he should be.

It is inconceivable to me that any reasonable person after reading Kelso's proposed policies could not see his plan as pure socialism -- governmental control of the means of production. This is definitely not capitalism.

A good rule of thumb is that any government policy means government control -- unless that government policy is freedom. Kelso's "new capitalism" is in fact a blueprint for a totally socialist society. The most incredible thing is that he claims to propose his plan to avoid socialism.

The CDIC would have to make countless arbitrary rules about who was eligible for the program and who wasn't. By Kelso's own description, bankers would basically become government agents interpreting regulations and helping to operate a government program. Their decisions would be based on political governmental edict rather than good solid business factors.

Only a fool would believe that CDIC guaranteed loans would not soon permeate the capital market, drying up available capital to non-government approved enterprise. Eventually, anyone not qualifying for the CDIC program would be at a tremendous competitive disadvantage to those using

the program. Why should anyone strive for financial well being if government programs will eventually discriminate against them?

Creating the CDIC would substitute a political economy for a free market economy. It would open the whole system up to graft and corruption both in terms of bureaucrats wielding undeserved power and in terms of crafty entrepreneurs ripping off a shoddily run government program.

Eventually, the government, through CDIC, will literally be controlling the economy by deciding who's going to get loans, and for what purpose. No better plan could be conceived to destroy free enterprise and substitute socialism in the name of "capitalism."

Even beyond Kelso's CDIC blueprint for socialism, he advocates several changes in free market corporate operations. For instance, Kelso wants some kind of legal requirement that all earnings of corporations be paid out in dividends rather than allow investment for future expansion. This goes right along with his plans to eliminate speculation on resale of stock certificates. He wants an end to consumer credit so that people will be forced to become capitalists by foregoing consumption. (This is despite his fear that less consumption will hurt the economy.) Even if all corporate earnings were paid out in dividends, there is no assurance that people would spend the money on capital investment rather than consumption. The fact is that the government would get a larger part of it since dividends are taxed as non-earned income, and the sale of speculated stock is taxed at capital gains rates.

As an additional tool for the redistribution of wealth (which Kelso claims he does not advocate) he suggests major increases in inheritance tax rates. This proposal would give even less incentive for a man to build up his capital estate.

So as to not let Mr. Kelso off the hook too easily, let's look at some additional inconsistent remarks made by him which indicate a lack of understanding about capitalism and the free market.

At one point Kelso remarks that in Russia, industrialization is achieved at the cost of totalitarianism. Actually, industrialization isn't achieved very well in Russia, and even then only by almost completely foregoing consumption. In addition, Kelso is promoting totalitarianism here by creating an economy based on politics rather than the free market.

Kelso also claims that "conventional business financing falls far short of satisfying the basic principles of economic justice." The truth is that the free market finance system is the only one which does create economic justice. Justice means no more nor less than one deserves. Kelso's plan would, through government intervention, give some more than they deserve at the expense of others. At another point, Kelso says wealth should be distributed to those who produce, yet he comes up with plans like CDIC, and increased inheritance taxes.

Consistent with Kelso's something for nothing theory, he attempts to create capital wealth for those who he thinks don't have it by bookkeeping entries brought about by government guarantees without any abstaining from consumption. This is economically ridiculous and amounts to government increasing the money supply without additional wealth, thereby fueling inflation.

Placing his personal value judgment on everyone else, Kelso states that "society's first economic duty to its citizens is to enable them to be or become productive." True capitalism, meaning economic freedom, is the only way that individuals will have the opportunity to be or become productive. "Society" is a group of individuals, and individuals should have no duty to anyone other than

those they choose to contract with. It is individual freedom that sparks economic growth even for less productive people. Kelso's meddling in the economy is nothing but anti-productive.

Elsewhere, Kelso states that we "need even more intensive efforts by government and government supported power blocs to divert the wealth produced by capital to those who do not own capital." If this isn't a proposal for the redistribution of wealth and socialism, then neither was the Communist Manifesto.

Later Kelso states "every major increase in new capital formation that is not accompanied by an increase in the number of new 'capitalists' is a leap in the direction of socialism." Not only is this an untrue statement in itself, but if there is any leap to socialism, it would be to adopt Kelso's proposals.

While Kelso indicates that it's impossible for those without capital to become capitalists, he complains that "today owners of a hotel suddenly become owners of a chain of hotels" and says the same about restaurants and warehouses. This only points out the fallacy of his theory. If someone has a good idea, and foregoes a little consumption, then there's no reason why he couldn't become a wealthy capitalist. If someone doesn't do that, it's primarily because they don't have the qualities necessary to be capitalists. One of the most dangerous aspects of Kelso's theory is that he wants to make the government the insurer for people who probably don't have the qualities to be capitalists, are poor credit risks, and don't deserve loans.

At another point, while speaking woefully about inevitable socialism if we don't adopt his plan, Kelso states "socialist methods of new capital formation are more efficient and quicker than traditional methods of business finance now employed by the free world." This

is called talking out of both sides of your mouth.

Kelso virtually ignores that there is a skill involved in choosing good capital investment which should be rewarded. Instead, he figures that by putting capital into anyone's hands, benefit will result.

In short, Kelso's theory closely follows that of another economist who advocated, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' Kelso further admits the failure of his theory by stating that, with it in effect, "the government would wield considerable power."

It is unfortunate indeed that so many pages of words need to be produced describing Kelso's illogical economic theory, but when the legislature and the people of Alaska are asked to swallow the demagogic AGSOC proposal of Senator Gravel, they should know what the ultimate theory is behind the AGSOC plan. After examining Kelso's inconsistent and illogical reasoning, it would be incredible that any legislator could lend their support to AGSOC. Let's look at how the AGSOC proposal fits into Kelso's overall plan, and why certain parts of Kelso's plan are conveniently being left out at the initial stages of AGSOC.

In brief, AGSOC would hand out shares of stock "free" to most every Alaskan. The corporation would be formed by the initial appropriation of millions of your tax dollars by the government, with no guarantee or liability by the state or the stockholders (at least for the time being). One indicator of the deception built into AGSOC is that while its initiative literature only mentions initial government aid to the project, the Alaska House State Affairs Committee and Senate Finance Committee plans call for the likely guaranteeing of loans to AGSOC by the state. Ownership of the "free" shares would have all kinds of restrictions: including the number of shares, how and when they could be sold, and who could own them. Then, this paper corporation would supposedly be able to

to borrow all kinds of capital to invest in money-making projects that would make us all wealthy since it would be required to pay all hoped-for earnings out in dividends without investing in itself. Even though there is talk of AGSOC buying various companies, one might wonder at the viability of such companies if they're willing to sell to AGSOC.

Comparing such a plan to Kelso's theory, it's easy to see what essential feature of Kelso's plan is missing from AGSOC. That missing piece is CDIC and the government guarantee of any part of the operation.

The question might be asked how could such a plan work when even Kelso admitted that some kind of a guarantee or collateral is absolutely essential to the formation and acquisition of capital? The answer is that it won't.

For AGSOC to go begging to a lender for money would be ridiculous. Can you imagine yourself, or any other intelligent person, readily lending huge amounts of capital to some immature youngster with no experience, no well-formed ideas, no collateral, no guarantee, and no strong sense of direction? Of course not. And this is exactly what AGSOC will be when it attempts to get a loan.

The only reason anyone would lend money to such a scheme would be if there were some hidden factors involved. I can immediately see at least one possibility of such a hidden factor.

The most dangerous of such hidden factors would be the unwritten assumption that based on political experience, the government, (State of Alaska) would eventually step in and guarantee, loan, or subsidize to AGSOC if it should ever find itself in bad finances (which it is doomed to from the outset). Any astute political observer (such as Senator Gravel) knows very well that if the state had already invested millions into AGSOC's start-up costs, had

perhaps lent money to AGSOC, if powerful legislative political figures had supported the AGSOC concept, and if politically appointed 'leading citizens' had been appointed to its directorship -- then the State of Alaska would politically be forced into saving the sinking ship of AGSOC before it went totally under. Such a bail-out of AGSOC by the state would be inevitable, and would complete Kelso's blueprint for socialism. There is no way that those demagogic promoters of AGSOC would allow AGSOC to go under, and if there's one attribute which politicians like to maintain, it's the characteristic of infallibility. Senator Gravel's primary concern is getting re-elected in 1980. The AGSOC 'something for nothing' appeal might get him over that hurdle and set him up for another six years, by which time he would find another distraction with which to attempt to fool the voters.

It would be this unwritten, but politically sound assumption of bail-out by the wealthy state of Alaska that might actually find someone willing to 'risk' a loan to AGSOC. An analogous situation would be a child's (AGSOC's) first loan, with the father (politicians) winking in the background that he will actually guarantee the loan even though it's not on paper. Such a risky loan would particularly be possible by the application of political pressure or offer of political gain by a powerful promoter of AGSOC to some government protected holder of extra capital which could be loaned to AGSOC (political payoff).

The next question to ask is, why wouldn't the AGSOC proposal include government subsidy, loans, and guarantees right from the beginning? The answer is simple. It would be easier for Kelso and Gravel to hold AGSOC up as "capitalistic" and not socialistic if they can minimize the aspect of government involvement. They may also be clever enough to realize that it wouldn't be necessary to include government guarantees at the outset. If they just feed

AGSOC to the people a little at a time, they'll be hooked by the time it's too late to do anything about it. Promoters of AGSOC would know that once the corporation was created on paper, and stock was issued to all Alaskans, it will be easy to get the missing government guarantees and subsidies worked into the picture later on. When those subsidies and bail-outs occur later on, individual owners of AGSOC shares may not be personally liable as stockholders, but they would certainly be liable as taxpayers.

In addition to the possible devious scheme behind AGSOC, there are many other aspects of it which make it undesirable. For instance, promoters claim that the fact that AGSOC would not be subject to taxes on its earnings (even though shareholders would be on their dividends) will make it attractive enough for investors to lend to it. That not only points out the ridiculous level to which taxation has risen in this country, but it should be obvious to the observer that by exempting AGSOC from taxation, the government is actually subsidizing it, since all of us will probably have to make up the revenue lost by tax exemption.

Another aspect of AGSOC is its political control from the outset. Politicians would be appointed to its board of directors at the beginning, and because of its diversified ownership, those directors would be nearly impossible to dislodge. These political directors would have AGSOC competing with other businesses in the Alaskan economy with the competitive edge of no taxation and no capital requirements. Through a slow process, this politician's boondoggle would begin to control and affect more and more of the Alaskan economy, with government's help.

Since AGSOC would be prohibited from retaining earnings for reinvestment, it couldn't help itself grow even when reinvestment might be economically feasible.

Even if the claimed purpose of AGSOC is to somehow return wealth to the people, there is no question that there are many better ways to do so. The people of Alaska are already in a dangerous situation with a state government holding billions of dollars of surplus funds while individual Alaskans go without. The simplest, most reasonable, and most consistently capitalistic way to solve the problem is to take that dangerous surplus away from the government and give it to each individual to choose for himself whether to consume or invest with it. This can be achieved through the elimination of taxes, among other means. We must assume that each person knows his own happiness better than the government does.

I have laid out my observations about the theories promoted by Mr. Kelso and Senator Gravel. If you have been concerned enough to stay with me to this point, you may ask yourself, "What can I do?"

The thing that must be done is for all of us as individuals or in groups to oppose AGSOC now, before it's too late.

The most effective group to begin this effort is the hard-working, self-sufficient businessmen and businesswomen of Alaska. They are the ones who keep this economy limping along despite government interference, and they are among those who would be affected most adversely by the adoption of the AGSOC foolishness.

If Kelso's scheme is allowed to happen, capital accumulation, the source of our high American standard of living, would soon begin to dry up. Men do not save and invest when they know it will be confiscated from them.

Schemes like AGSOC would set up an economic dictatorship which, through the political application of capital, would select and manage the economy's industries and determine production goals. There is no more devious a plan for a socialist economy.

THE NEW CAPITALISTS

by

Louis O. Kelso and
Mortimer J. Adler

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

by

Percy L. Greaves, Jr.

This small book contains more economic fallacies than it does pages. The basic assumptions upon which it is built cannot withstand the light of careful scrutiny. Furthermore, the alleged facts are not documented and the logic employed is extremely loose. Its strong effect on the casual reader rests largely upon the repeated assertion of seemingly plausible statements which, upon close analysis, turn out to mean almost the exact opposite of what they first seemed to say.

Any attempt to put the book's proposals into effect would immediately reduce the incentive to produce and result in a rapid paring down of the American standard of living. At the same time, it would set up an economic dictatorship which, through the political allocation of capital, would select the management of the nation's industries and determine all production goals. In short, it is an unwitting blueprint for the establishment of a Soviet America.

A complete analysis of all the book's fallacies would necessitate a theoretical treatise of several large volumes. However, the following brief analysis of seven of the book's basic fallacies should be helpful in indicating why the book is unworthy of serious consideration. These seven basic fallacies are:

- I. Capital produces at least 90 percent of the gross national product. (pp. 5, 6, 38-40, et al.)
- II. A progressive concentration of the ownership of capital exists; the great bulk of capital is owned by 3 or 4 percent of the households (pp. 14-15, 28-37, et al.)
- III. Savings are not required for capital accumulation. (pp. 53, 55, 59, et al.)
- IV. No real shortages of labor and resources exist in Western nations. (pp. 4, 41, 46, 86, 101, 104 et al.)
- V. Government redistribution of income is now necessary. (pp. 6, 31, 32, 41, 45, et al, ad infinitum.)
- VI. Bank credit expansion can create wealth. (pp. 17-18, 55-56, 58-59, 60-63, 100-102, et al.)
- VII. Proposals provide for a free society. (Implicit throughout and stated in conclusion, pp 108-10.)

I. Capital produces at least 90 percent of the gross national product.

The early classical economists and Karl Marx believed that human labor produced all economic values. Today, most labor union leaders, as well as those who write our laws, believe that human labor is responsible for producing almost all economic values and that employees, as employees, are entitled to all increases in production.

The authors of this book believe that capital is responsible for the production of almost all economic values and that the share attributable to capital is ever increasing with each addition to available capital. They assume that this is an apparent fact and make no attempt to document it or defend it logically. They apparently assume that because the increasing use of capital results in higher physical volume of goods, all the increased human satisfaction resulting from such increased quantities must be attributed to capital.

This neo-capital theory of value is just as indefensible as the labor or neo-labor theory of value. They both ignore the essential factors of time and abstinence as well as the factor of profit and loss which results from the uncertainty of future demand at the time businessmen commit their capital to the time-consuming process of producing particular goods. Attributing 90 percent or more of all production to any one essential factor and belittling the contributions of the other factors as insignificant and no longer needed is a little like attributing all football victories to the backs who score the touchdowns and thus implying that the linemen are no longer necessary. Attention is concentrated on the sensational at the expense of other very essential contributions. No football game can be won without linemen. Similarly, no economic production can take place without human foresight and the combination of capital and labor over a period of time. Each of the four factors is both important and essential.

Capital is always the result of human action. To obtain capital, men must first save, i.e., consume less than they produce. Only such savings can give them the time and ability needed to produce capital goods. Human ideas and foresight of future needs must also precede the introduction of every new capitalistic method. Then men must not only produce the capital goods but also direct and manage their use in production of other goods. Without the human factor, there would be no production, capitalistic or otherwise. Capital alone is incapable of producing anything.

Men do not value all labor or all capital. Men only value the specific units of labor or capital which they are considering in connection with a specific situation. Men think in terms of the value to them of one more, or one less, unit, that is the marginal unit. If they are buying, they compare the value to them of one more unit of labor or capital of a specific type and the price they must pay for it. They then buy until one more unit is no longer worth its market price to them. When they consider selling, they compare the value to them of one less specific unit with the value to them of the sum of money they receive in return for it. The market values of all types and units of both labor and capital are traceable to the values consumers are expected to place on their final products.

In the market place all identical units sold at the same time and place are sold at the same price. The market process thus tends to allocate every available unit of capital and labor to the production of those products which are expected to bring the highest prices from consumers. This means that each additional unit of capital tends to be used to produce something considered less valuable than what was produced with previously available capital. Otherwise, the previously available units of capital would have been used to make those products.

So, with any given population, each additional unit of capital is not only worth less than the units of the previously existing supply of capital units, but it also reduces the value of every other existing capital unit with which it competes. Thus, with any given population, every increase in the amount of available capital reduces the importance of every existing unit of capital. Man can then have more of the things he wants but the additional things are not as important to him as the things he desired when less capital was available. So more capital makes capital less important (valuable), rather than more important (valuable) to man.

Let us attack them in another way. As man is constituted, his desires are insatiable. As soon as some desires are satisfied, other unsatisfied desires arise to take their place. If they did not, man would stop eating and all his other activities. He would, in fact, lie down and die.

As long as man lives, he has unsatisfied desires. This means there is always a demand for more of what labor can produce with available resources. There are always ores that are not mined, land that is not planted, waters that are not fished, and goods that are not made because there is an insufficiency of labor. Labor, a necessary factor of all economic production, is the limiting factor in almost all areas of production. Every new person born on this earth brings his own unsatisfied demands for more things than can be produced with available supplies of labor. There is no such thing as a sufficiency of all kinds of labor.

Some types of labor are always in short supply. The economic problem is how to use available supplies of labor so as to produce the highest valued possible products, that is, how to prevent the waste of available supplies in idleness or producing less valuable products than such types of labor are capable of producing. All men have a point at which they prefer rest or leisure to the results of more labor, but up to that point men desire more of the goods and services that they can obtain only by more of their own labor or by spending money they are paid for contributing more of their labor.

Millions are unemployed today because political conditions either make them unemployable or create a situation in which they prefer to be unemployed, even though there is a great unsatisfied demand for the things they could help to produce. These political conditions are the laws and customs which hinder or prohibit the employment of persons where they could be most productive in terms of what consumers want more of most. These laws and customs include those that permit unions

to raise wages above free market rates, thus reducing the number employable in unionized industries; minimum wage laws, which prohibit the employment of those for whose products consumers will not pay the equivalent of the minimum wage; unemployment benefits, which encourage men to remain unemployed; and employment taxes, including social security taxes, progressive income tax rates and higher rates for overtime, all of which increase the costs of labor to employers and thus to the ultimate consumers.

It must be remembered that businessmen are merely middlemen between the workers and consumers. They will always hire every possible person they can afford to pay, up to wage rates that raise costs above what they can expect to recover from consumers. If they can make a penny by hiring one man more and selling his product, they will do so. Businessmen constantly strive to hire all who are willing to work at the free market wages which are set at the point which it is expected can be recouped from the ultimate consumer. Laws and customs which interfere with such free market wages also interfere with employment. They either cause unemployment or shift men into poorer paid jobs where they compete with less skilled persons who are driven further down the economic ladder, some of them being pushed below the minimum wage and thus into compulsory unemployment. These interventions have produced mass unemployment but in a free market society there can be no surplus of labor as long as men have unsatisfied desires which the employment of labor could satisfy. As mentioned above, such unsatisfied desires are a fact of human life.

One of the values of owning capital is that it saves men time. If we have the capital, we do not have to take the time and trouble to produce it. The payment for capital is thus a payment for time saved as well as for the labor needed to produce it. The payment for time is called interest. The rate of interest is determined by man's time preference, that is, by how much he prefers to have some things now rather than a year from now. Businessmen devote time and labor to the production of specific types of capital goods when they foresee that the cost of producing such capital goods will be less than their expected market value at the time of their completion. Not even the best businessman can always foresee future market conditions perfectly. This imperfection of human foresight is responsible for the factor of profit and loss. A period of time must elapse between the time businessmen decide what to produce and its later availability for sale. Those who turn out to have been relatively the most proficient in foreseeing correctly future demands make a profit. Those who do not suffer a loss.

In this connection, it should be remembered that profits are the amounts they receive over and above their labor costs, expenses for supplies and raw materials, and interest charges on necessary capital for the necessary period of time. When businessmen recover only their expenses for labor, supplies and raw materials and do not recover sufficient funds to pay the interest rate they could have obtained by lending their capital funds, they have suffered a loss. No one goes into business without the hope of earning more than he could by lending his money out or putting it in a savings account. On the other hand, profit or loss is merely the relative difference in expected market values between the time production is started and when it is completed, that is the time when the producer can transfer its ownership to another who then assumes the responsibility for future changes in its value.

For the fallacy of this book, all this means that the contributions of capital to production must be traced back to the contributions of the four essential factors that are necessary for the creation of capital. These four factors are human foresight, scarce goods consumed (savings) human labor and time. The scarce goods consumed in producing capital are the tools, supplies, and raw materials which, in turn, represent savings produced by human labor over a preceding time period.

The more capital savings there are available, the more apt we are to undertake projects which take a long time to produce to the point of operation and which will last a long time before their value is fully consumed. This means that interest payments are likely to be a larger factor in the costs of such enterprises. Any profits above the basic interest rate will attract competition which will pare down and finally eliminate the profit item. However, with the passage of time and changes in consumer preferences, new opportunities constantly arise for the re-emergence of new profits and losses.

As men are constituted, human foresight in deciding what to produce is imperfect and always will be. Likewise, our time, labor and capital are in short supply and always will be. The competition of a free market will allocate available supplies so that in the long run they will be combined to produce the highest possible values known to mankind. Should any investment temporarily obtain profits over and above labor, material and interest charges, competition, if not politically prevented, will soon tend to eliminate the profits. All profits are at best only fleeting in character and must be re-earned if they are to reappear.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that every increase in capital permits the production of goods and services not previously produced. Each new addition to capital goes to work by bidding up wages and the prices of raw materials before it can obtain the factors needed to go into production. Then, the newly produced goods must compete with existing goods and services and offer consumers a better buy before the contributor of the capital can receive a cent back on his investment. Further, the capital goods and the products they make must continue to compete for their originally estimated life if the capitalist is to get back his full investment with interest and possibly a net profit.

Another popular fallacy, inherent in the logic of the book's authors, is that it is thought that if corporate income taxes are reduced or repealed, the present profits before taxes would continue to be about what they are now and that this would be a windfall for the owners of capital. This is a gross error.

As long as a market economy exists, competition will determine the allocation of the reduced taxes among the various market participants as each specific condition dictates. This means that the repeal of 50 percent corporate income taxes would not double available corporate income as the authors seem to think when they estimate the share of production they attribute to capital. Actually, market competition would rapidly force the sharing of the tax savings in lower prices, increased production and higher wages. No doubt such an event would affect interest rates (time preferences). It would also change the

pattern of goods and services produced and thus those on which the highest profits of the future would be made. However, these changes in the allocation of produced income would be determined by the existing market forces and not by corporations trying to maintain the same wages, prices and production pattern as prevailed before the reduction in corporate income taxes.

Corporate income taxes are indirect taxes levied on market operation. Such taxes tend to hide the real burden of government spending from the general public which in the long run must bear the full burden. Unfortunately, many high and low income people, as well as the authors of this book, tend to think that it is the capital stock holders who now bear the full burden of corporate income taxes. This is just not so. Investors still earn the market rate of interest plus profits or less losses, depending on the foresight of each company's management, under existing conditions, in supplying what consumers want most as shown by how they spend their money.

In the long run, those who accumulate capital by consuming less than they produce must receive interest on their savings. If they did not, they would not invest their savings in capitalistic production. No law short of a complete dictatorship can force a man to save and invest without payment of interest. Nor can any law eliminate the uncertainties of the future. Any attempt to reduce or eliminate profits from business enterprise would only result in reducing the efforts of business to provide more efficiently for the uncertain human wants of an unknowable future.

While laws can and do reduce the return on capital, they cannot do so without at the same time reducing real wages and increasing the costs of the goods and services people want. Every government tax, rule or regulation which is not for the purpose of protecting or defending life, health, property or the activities of the market place must be a burden on all market participants. What is more, it is the market and not the government that allocates that burden and it does not spare those with low incomes. Except for their proposal to remove all corporate income taxes, the proposals of this book would increase the present burdens of every American. Its authors have no real concept of how a capitalistic society functions and how the benefits from the increased use of capital are shared by all market participants.

II. A progressive concentration of the ownership of capital exists; the great bulk of capital is owned by 3 or 4 percent of the households.

There is a slight plausibility to this argument. However, such plausibility is entirely due to political interferences rather than free market operations. One little known result of the political interventions before, during and since the New Deal is that they have tended to protect the positions of those already at the top of the business heap by making it considerably more difficult for new and struggling new competitors to replace them.

This is particularly true of the tax laws. Under present tax laws, it would be impossible for any man or family to duplicate the contributions to society of Henry Ford. He raised wages and benefited millions by making autos available for a few hundred dollars because he was able to

plow back his profits into expansion of his original small plant. This process could not be duplicated on a similar scale today. In this connection, it should be further stressed that the benefits of his increased capital investment did not all go to him or his family. The market compelled him to share his gains with his workers, his suppliers and his customers.

Other laws also help to protect those who have arrived from the competition of newcomers. This is most apparent in the labor area where union members can keep the unemployed from competing for the highest paid jobs. This unfortunately is the underlying cause of the economic distress and unrest among American negroes. However, all interventionary laws have this effect. It is quite evident where permits or licenses are required for the sole purpose of limiting competition. Laws which prevent the use of new materials or more economic methods or protect featherbedding are other instances. So also are the farm laws which curb the most efficient use of land. So also are oil import quotas, export licenses, interstate commerce regulations, certain food and drug regulations and many many more types of government owned and operated activities.

However, it is not such intrenchment of established business that the authors of this book have in mind. Nonetheless, it is the results of such interventions that opened the door to their approach. They build heavily on the results of government directed expansion of bank credit and the progressive income tax. They constantly stress the point that much present day capital accumulation is amassed by corporations plowing back their earnings rather than paying them out in dividends. They even admit that personal income taxes at higher rates than those on capital gains are a major factor.

However, they neglect to mention another contributing factor---that interest payments on corporate bonds entirely escape corporate income taxes. This fact, plus the effects of inflation, encourages the accumulation of capital in the form of corporate debts and capital gains upon the retirement of the bonds. They do not seem to realize that many of the conditions they deplore could be eliminated by simply removing the double taxation now levied on corporate dividends and levying the same tax rate on all personal and corporate income.

Unfortunately, the error in their reasoning is still greater. They assume that because a great part of capital accumulation takes place within existing corporations that almost all of it does and then as they proceed they not only assume that all capital accumulation happens in this manner but also that the owners of capital stock always remain the same persons. Actually, where corporations accumulate capital in order to provide their owners with capital gains rather than dividends, the stockholders must sell some of their holdings in order to realize their capital gains. The authors ought to visit the stock market some day, or at least read the figures on the turnover of stock ownership every business day. It runs into millions of shares.

While the authors with ever increasing emphasis proclaim the ever narrowing number of the nation's stockholders, the actual figures belie them. On June 24, 1965, the New York Times and Wall Street Journal

published figures of the New York Stock Exchange reporting that the number of stockholders of publicly held corporations has increased with every count made since 1952. The total figure now exceeds 20 millions and includes one out of every six adults in the United States. This is a far cry from the claim of the authors and this is only for the publicly owned corporations.

Many of our wealthiest men are owners of closely held privately owned corporations. So are many of our middle class citizens, including millions who place their savings in their own businesses with which they are more familiar than with the affairs and management of publicly owned corporations. The facts indicate that over the years the ownership of capital has become ever wider as has the resulting benefits to workers and consumers who use the many products made possible by the increase in capital. Many more than the Ford family are now benefiting from the existence of the Ford Motor Car Company. And so it is with every large corporation that earns profits.

The authors completely overlook the huge savings of the masses in many areas, including home ownership and other real estate. Take life insurance for example. There are now more than 120 million individual policy-holders insured with legal reserve life insurance companies holding more than \$141 billions in assets. In 1960, 89 percent of all family heads were insured, including 71 percent of those with annual incomes under \$3000. In 1963, American families received from life insurance companies payments amounting to 10 billion dollars. Such payments as well as the assets held by life insurance companies for their policy-holders are increasing with every passing year.

By the end of 1964, insured deposits in mutual savings banks had risen to more than 42 billion dollars, compared with only 10 billions at the end of 1945. This quadrupling was not done by any 3 or 4 percent of the nation's households. In the same period the savings capital of the savings and loan associations had increased from less than 8 billion dollars to almost 102 billion dollars. This is not where a few enormously wealthy capitalists are concentrating their savings. Individuals also now hold more than 49 billion dollars worth of the national government's baby bonds. This figure is up by more than 6 billion dollars since the end of World War II.

There is absolutely no evidence that there is a progressive concentration of capital in the United States. In fact, all the available evidence points in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, too much of the increasing savings have gone into forms that are hard hit by the inflationary policies of our national government.

There are two lesser points that should also be mentioned. First, the authors consider depreciation, amortization and depletion, along with withheld earnings, as "internally generated funds" which contribute "today almost three-fourths of new capital formation." Such funds are merely a replacement of capital consumed in production. While they may represent a demand for new capital goods, they are not an increase in capital, but merely a maintenance of prior capital accumulations.

Second, the book makes no mention of the effects of inflation on corporate earnings as figured by tax authorities, in general, a part of what is considered "taxable profits" is in fact only illusory profits. Under the tax laws, taxpayers are allowed to amortize or depreciate only the original costs and not the eventual replacement costs. Thus, when inflation increases the dollar costs for replacements, the government is actually taxing as a profit what is in fact a loss, or technically a consumption or depletion of previously accumulated capital assets. So the authors actually consider the mere replacement of such consumed capital as further evidence of their imagined concentration of the ownership of capital.

III. Savings are not required for capital accumulation.

This is one of the most idiotic ideas on which the entire book is based. The authors bluntly assume that capital can be created from scratch and without any abstinence by the application of the future earnings from capital created by the mere bookkeeping addition of sums to bank deposits. The only basis furnished for such illogical reasoning is a study that Harold G. Moulton made some thirty years ago. That study indicated that historically capital accumulations have on certain occasions increased most rapidly during periods of "high-level consumption."

Dr. Moulton made this study for Brookings Institution early in the New Deal. It was part of a four volume series in which each succeeding volume pyramided its own fallacies on top of those of the preceding volumes. However, Dr. Moulton and his Brookings associates, including Dr. Irwin G. Nourse, later, 1946-49, Chairman of President Truman's Council of Economic Advisors, are not to blame for the extreme interpretation placed on their findings by the authors of the book under review. In boom times, particularly those induced by expansion of bank credit, there are more dollars for both consumption and investment.

The fact remains: all capital accumulation must be the result of savings on the part of someone. Capital can only be amassed by abstaining from consuming all that is produced and available. Before goods can exist, they must be produced. Those who consume all that they produce have no savings or capital. Those who consume less than they produce have some savings. These savings are their capital. It is as simple as that.

Unfortunately, the authors of this book have been fooled, as have many others, by the illusion that the granting of bank loans by bookkeeping processes is a wealth creating process. This illusion will be dealt with under VI. Here, it is sufficient to state that physical capital goods, the only kind that can be used in production, can not be created by accounting manipulations. Capital accumulation requires abstinence on the part of the owners of wealth. They must first live on less wealth than they, their ancestors or other benefactors have produced.

In the market economy, people are paid in money for their contributions to the market. When they do not spend all their money income for consumption of goods and services, there must remain in the economy a portion of their contribution to society which is available as capital. They can use that capital themselves or transfer title to it by lending or investing that part of their money income. When one lends his savings, he merely transfers title temporarily to existing wealth.

This, of course, assumes no theft or manipulation of the money supply such as the authors of this book endorse when they propose making their proposed capital-creating bank loans redeemable in newly created Federal Reserve Notes. When one borrows or spends artificially created bank credit, one merely exercises a claim on previously existing wealth---wealth which in a free and moral society would be allocated to someone spending funds that were received in return for a contribution to society.

Capital cannot be created out of thin air or by the bookkeeping opening of a bank credit. The authors believe that capital can be so created. All that they ask is that the bank borrower pay an insurance premium to a government agency which will insure the bank against any entrepreneurial error by the user of such accounting-created-capital. They expect that such accounting created capital will earn sufficient profits and interest to pay off the original loan with interest. This is pure nonsense. Yet the entire plan of the book is based on it.

IV. No real shortage of labor and resources exist in Western nations.

If this were so, there would be no economic problem. A prime factor of life here on earth is that the things men want and can produce are in short supply. Where they are not in short supply they are free goods and there is no economic problem.

The top shortage is labor. As mentioned under number I, many resources are not fully developed to the extent of present technological knowledge because there is a shortage of labor. The usual expression is that labor costs would be too high, or that it would be uneconomic or simply that it would not pay. All of which means that there are better uses available for the labor on hand. Unfortunately, governments are not always guided by such economic logic. The present development of atomic power for peaceful uses is still uneconomic. The labor and capital so consumed could produce higher values if there were no government interference with market processes. This is true of almost every government activity except those of defense and the peaceful settlement of disputes. If this were not so, men would find it profitable to undertake such activities in a free market.

Nothing can have value in the market place unless the supply is less than the demand for it as a means for satisfying some human need or want.

It goes without saying that there are many resources around the world that men could and would exploit if governments did not hinder or prohibit such exploitation. However, there is a real shortage of labor and resources in the form that men find them useful and there always will be.

V. Government redistribution of income is now necessary.

The only justification for such a belief is that of Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, where they state that every government intervention makes matters worse and creates a demand for further intervention until the point is reached where the whole capitalistic system is overthrown and replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat.

A good argument might be made that because government spending, taxing and inflation policies have destroyed considerable private savings and potential private savings the government now has an obligation to those it has impoverished. However, that is not the argument of the book. The authors imply that all present deplorable conditions are the natural result of a free and unhampered capitalistic system which must be reformed by governmental action. They thus offer their plan for the political creation of capital with the promise that Congress will vote to give every person his fair share of the capital created by bank loans. The owners of such capital will then somehow be entitled to receive 90 percent or more of all production.

It is true, of course, that there are people in this country who are in need of financial help. That this number is now large is due primarily to political interferences with the operations of a free market as well as uneconomic fiscal and monetary policies. However, it is still likely that private charity could and would take care of all cases of real need, particularly if political restraints on employment were lifted.

Present day political programs only serve to encourage and sustain poverty and unemployment by dampening the spirit and ability of people to find self supporting jobs where they could contribute to society as they improve their own lot in life. Present programs lead people to believe that they are entitled to a living without any contribution on their part. In fact, they are even encouraged to think they are contributing when they are living on and distributing largesse obtained through taxes collected from the more successful citizens. The illusion that the burden of such taxes fall entirely on the well-to-do is encouraged at every opportunity. It is popularly considered a form of economic justice. Actually, as explained previously, the market allocates the tax burden on every citizen of the land, even those with the least to spend.

This book encourages the popular fallacy that only a few own capital and if the government did not intervene, these few would receive 90 percent of the nation's production. This is pure nonsense. Market processes, if left free from government interferences, allocate all production to those responsible for its production. Everyone is then free to choose the most attractive opportunity open to him. Every worker is assured of the market value of his wages before those advancing his wages can get back a cent. The market processes thus see to it that the capitalists are the last to receive any of the gains from their contribution. This book encourages its readers to think otherwise. They declare that every person is entitled to become owners of capital without any contribution or sacrifice on their part, except for the

payment of a small insurance fee to a government agency. Their plan is a plan for the redistribution of 90 percent of total production. It would rapidly reduce total wealth to the point where many would starve. They simply do not understand that every honest and moral person would attain his maximum possible income in a free and unhampered market economy.

VI. Bank credit can create wealth.

It would take a volume to present fully the monetary explanation of the trade cycle as expounded by Ludwig von Mises. However, Mises has clearly demonstrated that modern recession and depression problems are basically the result of political attempts to stimulate economic activity by the expansion of the money supply through the creation of circulating bank credit. Should the holders of such bank credit desire to convert their artificially created bank accounts into cash, the central banks, in our case the Federal Reserve Banks, are empowered to print legal tender paper money against evidences of debt owed to banks. In the United States, such printed money is in the form of Federal Reserve Notes.

The authors of this book would extend this disastrous principle still further. They propose the printing and issuance of Federal Reserve Notes against bank loans with no security except government insurance and the hope that the sum created will be put to work as capital in such a way that it will before too long repay the loan with interest. They blithely assume that such government insurance can be sold for a mere trifle just as the National Government now insures mortgages on real property.

Actually, banks perform a useful social function when they operate as middlemen between savers who want to lend money and borrowers who need and want funds they expect to be able to repay with interest at the maturity of the loan. Such loans are merely temporary transfers of monetary savings (purchasing power) from one person to another. They do not increase the available amount of spendable money in the economy. What the borrower can now spend, the lender can no longer spend. Such voluntary loans help all parties concerned, whether made through a bank or not.

However, when a bank makes a loan merely by adding the sum to the checking account of the borrower, it is not transferring to the borrower the title to someone's actual monetary savings (purchasing power). The bank is merely adding this sum to the available amount of spendable money in the economy. This addition to the money supply empowers the borrower to go out and buy something, leaving less available for all previous owners of money. Thus, those who have obtained their money in payment for their contributions to society find that they cannot buy as much as they could have bought if the bank had not issued an artificially created claim to its borrower. Such bank loans merely transfer a part of the existing wealth from those who helped create it to the borrower from the bank. Such bank loans add no wealth to that previously existing. They merely transfer titles to existing wealth at the expense of all those who have earned or saved their dollars which will now buy less.

Needless to say, such expansions of bank credit cannot create any useful capital goods. All that such bank credit, as these authors propose and endorse, can do is to transfer ownership of existing capital goods from their rightful owners to those receiving the proceeds of the bank loan. It is done by a process that probably not one in a million can detect, for each loan reduces each person's purchasing power only infinitesimally. However, over a period of time such loans have a tremendous effect. Any expansion on the scale proposed by these authors would quickly depreciate the already shaky value of the dollar.

The authors propose that their plan will make everyone a capitalist merely by the creation of such bank credits. They believe that future earnings from the capital so created will pay off the loans with interest and that thereafter the borrowers will be entitled to all further earnings for evermore. Such income is then supposed to make it possible to sustain millions without any further effort on their part.

Such a program is absolute nonsense. It could not work once people realized what it meant. It would certainly not encourage an increase in real savings, the only kind businessmen can use. The greatest incentive for the increase of capital is for people to believe that their savings are safe from either direct or indirect confiscation. The scheme proposed is an indirect confiscation of the wealth of others. It could not and would not increase wealth in any useful form. It would merely dilute titles to existing wealth until the point was reached when people no longer found it profitable to invest their savings in capitalistic production. They would then put their savings in gems, jewelry and precious metals that they could hide and quickly move should the authorities become too nosy.

VII. Proposals provide for a free society.

The first fifty or more pages of the book make no mention of the government controls involved. However, starting on about page 55, such controls are mentioned on almost every succeeding page. In short, the scheme provides that a governmental agency would insure all lending banks against all future human errors of their borrowers in investing their loans so they can be repaid by earnings without any further claim on the sum lent or what was bought with the sum so lent. A government agency would thus be forced to determine all future investments as well as the amounts banks might lend for the purpose of creating capitalists out of bank borrowers. By such a fantastic scheme of government controls of the very life-blood of business we would "start the process of industrialization without resort to past savings." (Pg. 55)

To get the plan started, they would force present corporations to pay out all earnings in dividends. To keep it going and put an end to uncontrolled investments, they would enact inheritance taxes which equalize the dividend income of the entire population, or so they think. They would prohibit those owning a certain amount of income from capital from working and thus competing for jobs. The government could control all monopolies by shutting off capital and creating competitors. The government would, of course, prevent all malinvestment.

"Each loan would be made in accordance with policies established by Congress and administered by the Federal Reserve System" or some other agency "as Congress might determine." (Pg. 61) If the politicians would decide which industries and which managements could have capital, pray tell where would any free enterprise exist??

On page 75 we learn that the government would impose "high standards for demonstrating feasibility of new enterprises or new expansions before their securities could qualify for CDIC-insured loans." Shades of Thomas A. Edison !!! Could he have gotten the capital for his inventions?

On page 69 we learn that American political history has been characterized by changes "required to increase its efficiency in the face of its large-scale tasks by eliminating much of its original decentralization." Shades of Adolf Hitler!!!

They do admit, "there is no doubt that government would exercise considerable power." However, they do not admit that it would exercise totalitarian power over the access to capital, without which no business could even exist. If men were not free in the economic realm, they would soon find that they had lost all that freedom had ever meant. Who could print books and papers? Those the politicians selected and allocated the needed capital. Who could build churches and schools? Those the politicians selected and allocated the needed capital. Who could work? Those the politicians decided were eligible.

One could go on and on but the reader who has read this far should easily see that it is merely another scheme for milking those who have produced, saved and invested wealth for the benefit of those who will keep the politicians in office. The book's authors would make everybody a capitalist by giving them a share of the wealth already produced by others.

If such a scheme were ever attempted, capital accumulation, the source of the ever higher American standard of living, would soon dry up. Men do not save and invest when they know their savings will be despoiled or confiscated. Workers and consumers alike are heavily indebted to those who have saved in the past. Without such additions to capital by every succeeding generation, our standard of living would have stood still. If the capital so carefully accumulated over the decades should be dissipated by any such illogical wild scheme as this proposal, Americans would be compelled to return to the living standard of the Indians. Our population would also have to shrink to that of a century or more ago.

THE PRECEDING PAGES WERE TREATED AS
A UNIT IN THE ORIGINAL FILE.

**A Discussion of the Financial Foundation
for General Stock Ownership Plans***

by

Stephen A. Buser
(April 1979)**

***This paper was prepared in part from material gathered under a research project for the Ford Foundation and was submitted in support of oral testimony before the Alaska State Legislature in Juneau on March 20, 1979.**

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I. Preface and Summary

A General Stock Ownership Corporation (GSOC) is not a magical money machine. In the absence of external support in some form, a GSOC cannot be expected to earn a net cash flow simply by borrowing from one group of capital owners in order to finance asset acquisitions from other capital owners. Inappropriate analogies are sometimes drawn between financed asset acquisitions that a GSOC might undertake and those that wealthy individuals and solvent firms undertake as a matter of routine. By definition, wealthy individuals and solvent firms have equity bases to cushion temporary or chronic operating deficits. In contrast, the financial condition of an unsubsidized GSOC, is similar to that of any other firm whose liabilities exceed its assets; it is insolvent. Like any other insolvent firm, a GSOC can be made to show an operating profit if given sufficient subsidies in the form of donated cash or assets, tax benefits, and/or credit assistance. However, since these subsidies would have earned a normal return if put to alternative uses, it is erroneous to attribute a GSOC "profit" to its leverage-acquisitions. Any such "profit" is simply a residual of the normal return on the subsidies invested in a GSOC, after the GSOC's own expenses have been deducted.

Therefore, despite optimistic claims by a few exuberant supporters, a GSOC is more accurately described as an elaborate financial device for capturing and redistributing the federal taxes currently paid on privately owned assets. Since these tax payments can be sizable, the implicit federal subsidy represents a potentially valuable source of State revenue. However, under the federal "enabling" legislation a GSOC's tax liability is not forgiven but instead is passed through to (and borne fully by) the citizen shareholders of the GSOC. Technically, the federal tax "break" is limited distributions in excess of the

GSOC (pass through) tax liability. This provision carries important implications both for the financial viability of the GSOC and for the form of the distribution of the federal subsidy.

In terms of financial viability, the pass-through restriction, reduces the portion of the federal subsidy that a GSOC can use to cover its own overhead and debt-service expenses. Projected GSOC operating deficits (which any pure leverage investment company would run) must be funded from some other source. Most likely, State assistance will be required on a continuing basis and in an amount that is significant when measured against the after-tax benefits received by the citizens of the State.

In an attempt to lessen its own subsidy burden, a State might direct its GSOC to acquire assets that would generate a low (or even a zero) pass through tax liability. However, to the extent that such assets also generate low tax liabilities for existing owners, the federal subsidy is reduced as well. The "solution" that seems implicit in the federal legislation is for the GSOC to acquire assets that are eligible for tax credits and/or accelerated depreciation charges from owners who have already exhausted such benefits for themselves. Since nonsubsidized firms have a similar tax incentive for acquiring such assets, a GSOC must expect to pay prices above those that would otherwise prevail in the secondary market for depreciated assets. Sales at inflated prices would allow the selling firms to capitalize a greater portion of their scheduled tax payments to the federal government, reducing the portion of the subsidy captured by the GSOC.

GSOC advocates have suggested that careful investment analysis might eliminate such overpricing. However, the GSOC's investment team, will be virtually totally dependent on projections provided by the selling firms. Experi-

enced negotiators for selling firms also have been known to cite pressing cash needs or other smokescreens in an effort to convince buyers that the assets are actually offered below the prevailing market prices. Experienced buyers recognize, of course, that if such were in fact the case, a rational seller would always sell at the higher market price unless the sale at the lower price constituted an implicit payment for some past or future consideration. Such might be the case in a "pilot" program where a selling firm has a clear incentive to "prove" that the GSOC is viable in order to establish a future flow of subsidy benefits. In other cases, selling firms may simply rely on the observation that even at inflated prices, the GSOC will show a "profit" as long as the federal subsidy is less than fully capitalized by the seller.

Despite the apparent inevitability of the diversion of GSOC subsidies to selling firms, even GSOC directors with impeccable standards may be hard pressed to determine the true extent of these diversions. Efforts at extensive investment analysis might succeed in limiting the subsidies to selling firms but ^{by} only-creating another type of subsidy diversion in its place since the required analysis is apt to be quite expensive, and these costs must be subsidized as well. Regrettably, it is unlikely that even an outside "watch dog" agent (perhaps established by the State legislature) could successfully monitor GSOC activities. On the contrary, the risk appears far greater that outside pressure will be exerted on the GSOC directors to use their considerable subsidy powers in support of particular firms or banks that might be deemed "essential" to the State or local economy. In fact, it might be argued by some that the GSOC has a "moral obligation" to provide such support as long as it can do so and still show an operating "profit." For example, subsidy diversions to the shareholders of particular firms might be regarded as necessary to continue employment for

workers who might otherwise face a loss of jobs. Unfortunately, the firms destined for subsidy diversions are capital intensive rather than labor intensive so that GSOC subsidy diversions are apt to be extremely inefficient (in terms of cost per worker) as a means of providing job security.

When the inherent disadvantages of the GSOC concept are measured against the ambiguous federal support for the program, a State may decide that the "price" it must pay for a GSOC is too high in relation to the potential benefits. Even if a State determines that GSOC benefits are "offered" at a bargain under the federal legislation, the State should be aware that the citizen-shareholders in a GSOC will share the federal and State subsidies with the GSOC bureaucracy and with the firms that sell assets or lend funds to the GSOC. While subsidy diversions in small amounts might be regarded as "normal" operating costs, the potential for large-scale subsidy diversions cannot be ignored. Such diversions are not necessarily "bad," but they defeat the expressed purpose of the GSOC concept by funnelling benefits to existing capital owners rather than to new capital owners. At present the "unintended beneficiaries" of a GSOC program appear to be the shareholders of capital intensive firms, as well as banks and other lending institutions that might win the favor of a particular board of GSOC directors. The federal immunity from personal income taxes on distribution in excess of the GSOC pass-through tax liability obviously benefits citizens in the highest tax brackets the most. Those who pay little or nothing in the way of taxes obviously receive little or no benefits from this tax "break." Those suffering the most from the proposed GSOC program would be firms that would have to compete with the GSOC, either in the market for credit or in the market for depreciated assets. In addition, despite the fact that the costs of the federal and State subsidies would be dispersed, every dollar of benefits distributed

by the GSOC will have to be made up, either in the form of additional tax revenues to replace those diverted or in the form of greater inflation if the lost tax revenues are not made up.

Economists note that asset transfers do not create new cash flows. In fact, transfer programs, no matter how socially desirable they might be, absorb rather than generate market value as new costs are merely grafted onto the existing economy. Thus economists place a heavy burden of proof on the proponents of particular plans to show that their plans are adequately funded (or subsidized) and that the benefits actually accrue to the targeted groups. Unfortunately, despite the force of a highly emotional call for action, the GSOC backers have not satisfied these basic requirements. "Faith" and "vision" are all that have been offered in support of the contention that a GSOC can achieve its intended goals and avoid becoming simply one more program that promises broad-based benefits but instead imposes broad-based costs and funnels the benefits to familiar recipients, the banks, the capital intensive industries, and of course, bureaucracy itself.

II. Financial Viability of a GSOC

Case I: Viability without external support

To appreciate the limitations of the federal GSOC legislation, it is important to understand precisely how and why a GSOC is not financially viable without external support. To do so, let us reexamine a hypothetical example of financed capitalism found on p. 71 of the report submitted by Kelso & Co. to the Alaska State Legislature, "Design of an Alaskan General Stock Ownership Plan, Volume I" (February 15, 1979). In that example, a Mr. Adams borrows \$200,000 and builds a fourplex which he rents out for a total of \$24,000 per year. For simplicity, the drafters of the Kelso & Co. report abstract from vacancy risk, from taxes, from overhead expenses, and even from interest on the loan. Such simplifications might have served the narrow purposes of the commission issued by the State to Kelso & Co. They do little, however, to reassure a potential lender who is concerned with the financial viability of a GSOC. For example, with an interest rate of 10% (generous by today's standards), the annual debt service on a ten-year fully amortized loan is \$32,500 rather than the \$20,000 figure used in the interest-free example. Thus even if the \$24,000 earnings figure is reinterpreted as net taxes and net of all expenses, the financed acquisition plan would fall considerably short of the goal of self-liquidation. Instead of an excess annual cash flow of \$4,000 found in the zero-interest example, Mr. Adams would have to cover a short-fall of \$8,500 per year over the life of the loan. The loan could be amortized over a longer period, thus reducing the annual debt service. However the interest alone amounts to \$20,000 per year so that a self-liquidating the mortgage would have to be written with exceptionally long maturity. At an interest rate of 12% or better, the mortgage could never be paid off out of the projected rents alone.

Advocates for the concept of financed capitalism might observe that the rental rates chosen by the drafters of the Kelso & Co. report were arbitrary and just happened to be too low in order to make sense when representative charges are introduced. Therefore, it is important to recognize that even if the example were restructured so that Mr. Adams would have been able to arrange self-liquidating financing for his investment, that does not mean he would sell his fourplex to the GSOC at a price that (in the absence of external support) would allow the GSOC to finance the acquisition with a self-liquidating loan. On the contrary, rather than sell at such a price, Mr. Adams would simply refinance any outstanding mortgage against his fourplex, in order to raise the same amount of additional cash that the sale would have produced (after repaying the loan). Thus even though the financed capitalism concept might work for original investments, the model breaks down when it is applied to asset transfers. As long as asset sellers require full compensation for the stream of earnings they relinquish, the debt service on loans to provide such compensation must exhaust the full value of the asset's earning potential. Otherwise, the alternative of financed asset retention dominates the decision to sell the asset.

In reaching this general conclusion, it must be remembered that external factors, such as tax considerations, have not yet been introduced. Similarly, differences in borrowing capacities have not yet been considered. Thus the general conclusion is not contradicted by examples of asset acquisitions that are entirely financed via self-liquidating loans to individuals or firms who can secure the loan pledging more than just the asset's own earnings. Implicit in such arrangements is the very important premise that, if needed, the borrower can draw on other funds or resources. In contrast, a GSOC has no equity base to use

as supplemental collateral for loans. Thus in the absence of external support, a GSOC would be unable to acquire assets via self liquidating loans even though equity firms and some individuals might be able to do so. GSOC's are by no means unique in this regard. Extensive analysis of investment companies (including mutual funds) confirms that these equity institutions would not be viable as pure-debt firms. I.e., they do not earn a rate of return equal to their risk-adjusted cost of capital.

Case 2: Viability under the federal legislation

The federal "enabling" legislation is not a legal requirement for the operation of a GSOC. It is merely an open admission that a GSOC is not financially viable without external support of some form. On its own a GSOC would not earn leverage arbitrage profits, it would make leverage arbitrage losses as would any other pure-debt investment company. Without an equity base or an external subsidy to offset these losses no lender would extend funds to a GSOC. This observation, more than any other single factor, explains why pure-leverage investment companies have failed to materialize on their own despite promises of sure profits offered by advocates of financed capitalism.

Recent federal legislation grants qualifying GSOC's immunity from the federal corporate income tax. Had immunity been granted in an unrestricted form, a GSOC would have been able to use a greater portion of the pretax earnings on assets to cover GSOC overhead and to service the debt raised to finance asset acquisitions. Any excess subsidy would then have been available for distribution to citizen-shareholders or for accumulation as equity in the GSOC. To illustrate this point, let us return to the previous example, and assume that the pretax earnings on Mr. Adams' fourplex had been \$40,000, of which he was required to pay \$10,000 in federal taxes and another \$6,000 in state

taxes, leaving \$24,000 for expenses and debt service. Under federal (but not state) immunity, the GSOC would have the use of \$34,000 per year, and thus, over some price range, could afford to offer Mr. Adams more for the asset than he would be able to raise via his own self-liquidating loan. At such a price, Mr. Adams would capitalize all of the after-tax earnings plus a portion of the earnings stream otherwise lost to the federal government. In such a case, both Mr. Adams and the GSOC would benefit at the expense of the U. S. Treasury.

Apparently the U.S. Congress did not intend that the federal legislation reduce to merely a tax dodge (at least not so simply). Therefore, in granting GSOC's immunity, the "enabling" legislation also mandates that the equivalent tax liability be passed through to the citizen-shareholders without regard for the special tax status of the recipients. Had the GSOC been a viable-self-supporting firm, the pass-through restriction would not have been especially significant. A GSOC would simply pass through its own tax savings in order to cover the tax liability that it must also pass through. However, the GSOC requires these (or some other) funds to cover the amount by which its overhead and interest costs will exceed its (after-tax) earnings. Thus, as presently structured, the federal legislation does nothing to improve the financial condition of a GSOC. To qualify for the tax subsidy, the GSOC must accept an offsetting financial commitment.

Despite this negative assessment, a GSOC would have the same opportunities for tax-arbitrage exchanges as any other firm would, and it might be able to make use of such opportunities to strengthen its financial base. Tax savings arise if the tax payments that would have been made by an existing owner (by Mr. Adams in the hypothetical example), are less than those that a GSOC would incur and this difference is less than fully capitalized in the sale of the asset to

the GSOC. The corresponding portion of the pre-tax earnings flow is, in effect, donated by the federal government rather than purchased from the previous asset owner. Such opportunities arise as a matter of routine because of federal tax laws that provide acquisition tax credits and/or accelerated depreciation charges which are renewable only if the qualified assets are transferred to new owners. Thus a GSOC might earn a tax-arbitrage profit by acquiring depreciable assets from owners that have already exhausted the liberal tax benefits for themselves. Unfortunately, these assets offer similar tax advantages for acquiring firms other than GSOC's. Thus GSOC's must bid against other firms for these assets, and this competition will allow the selling firms to capitalize even greater portions of their projected tax payments.

Since a GSOC cannot earn tax-arbitrage profits by acquiring assets from firms in lower tax brackets than the GSOC (based on the pass-through computation), the only way that a GSOC might be able to strengthen its own financial base is to divert a portion of the federal tax subsidy to the shareholders of large capital-intensive corporations seeking to unload some of their depreciable assets after the initial tax benefits have been gutted.

This description of the federal legislation is vastly different from the expressed intentions of the backers of the GSOC concept. So much so in fact, that it is difficult to imagine that the U.S. Congress had a similar goal in mind in settling on the form of this particular "enabling" legislation. It would be far easier to explain the federal "enabling" legislation as an attempt to provide large capital-intensive firms with additional relief from federal taxation.

Case 3: Viability under alternative forms of State assistance

At present the extent of federal support for a GSOC appears anything but overwhelming. Kelso & Co. or some other source may be able to furnish a

description of the type of asset acquisitions that would recover enough of the federal subsidy to render a GSOC financial viability. As yet, however, no such encouragement has been provided. Nor is there any evidence for a legitimate reference to required State assistance as "start-up" costs. Surprisingly few of the proposed budget items are truly nonrecurring. On the contrary, virtually all of the GSOC's expenses contribute to the annual deficits that a GSOC must run in the absence of continuing financial assistance. These annual deficits are projected as substantial and must be supported from some external source. Moreover even after these deficits have been absorbed (by the State), the State must directly or indirectly provide for every dollar of benefits distributed by the GSOC (in excess of the GSOC tax liability). Recall the federal "contribution" is limited to forgiving the personal taxes that citizen-shareholders would otherwise owe on these excess distributions.

Although there are many forms that State assistance might take, any such assistance reduces to two basic dimensions, perpetual year-by-year maintenance, and/or an initial endowment. As a substitute for equity capital in a normal firm, an initial endowment of cash or earning assets would provide an income flow needed for an initial operating margin. To the extent that such an initial subsidy is insufficient, supplemental annual subsidies will be required as well. One obvious possibility for an annual maintenance subsidy is immunity from the State corporate income tax. In essence, the State could donate its own tax flow in support of the federal subsidy. Assuming that this benefit is less than fully capitalized in the sale prices of assets, the GSOC would then capture at least a part of the State subsidy (with the balance accruing to the seller of the asset as with the federal tax subsidy).

Credit assistance provides an alternative form of a maintenance subsidy. Instead of furnishing additional revenue, a credit subsidy is designed to reduce

borrowing costs and hence lower debt service claims against GSOC income. Agency status would provide the GSOC with direct access to the tax exempt borrowing market. Equivalently, the State could borrow (or divert funds from other uses) and lend to the GSOC at rates less than those charged in the fully taxable market. In either case, however, the State could have earned the higher (market) rate, on its funds and thus the State, should regard the difference in revenue as a subsidy to the GSOC.

Loan guarantees have been proposed as a low cost form of subsidy. Unfortunately, it is only the visibility of the cost that is low. In any insurance situation, such as a loan guarantee, it is not the visible or out-of-pocket expense that determines the true cost to the insurer. Far more important is the associated risk that must be borne. Without a highly diversified asset base to support precise actuarial assessments, the invisible costs of insurance are usually regarded as prohibitive rather than as negligible. If lenders (who are apt to be more highly diversified than the State) believed that these costs were negligible, they would not offer a substantial reduction in rates in exchange for a loan guarantee. The fact that lenders are willing to accept less interest in exchange for a loan guarantee indicates that they presume that the implicit risks are high. In effect, lenders are betting the difference in interest charges that even with massive federal and State subsidies, the GSOC may be overextended in relation to its financial commitments. It is important to note that financial overextension can arise even if the asset portfolio of a firm is of the highest possible quality.

A normal firm that is overextended but otherwise sound is referred to as undercapitalized. In order to raise debt capital, such a firm may first have to raise additional equity capital. In the case of a GSOC, there is no initial equity capital, only a subsidy base. If this base is insufficient to assure an adequate

operating profit margin, the condition of the GSOC is analogous to that of the undercapitalized firm. Loan guarantees provide an additional subsidy, and eliminate the lender's risks. But, since there is no reason to presume that the State has any advantage over lenders in terms of bearing such risks, any apparent "profit" from selling loan guarantees (in exchange for lower borrowing costs) is purely illusory.

In terms of pure cost effectiveness, direct cash payments provide by far the most efficient form for subsidies since they are the least costly to administer. However, these payments are also the most visible and therefore they are often the least attractive from a political standpoint. Opting for less visible but also less efficient forms of subsidy makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the State to assess the extent of its own subsidy. (Just as it is already difficult to assess the extent of the subsidy implicit in the federal GSOC legislation.) For a State that is truly concerned about the extent of its own subsidy to the GSOC program, it is especially important to consider only the most cost-effective and visible subsidy program. It is difficult to imagine what is to be gained, other than short-run political expediency, by burying the unavoidable costs of a GSOC through a series of complex financial arrangements.

III. Distribution of the federal and State subsidies

A GSOC may be useful as a device for capturing and redirecting federal tax revenues on earning assets. However, the GSOC's own budget, no matter how spartan, can only draw from the subsidy pool. Moreover, even before the subsidies get to the GSOC, a portion will be diverted to asset sellers in the form of inflated market prices. An additional portion of the subsidies will be absorbed by banks and other lenders who earn more money from engaging in leverage-arbitrage of their own than they do by creating those opportunities for others.

This observation explains why the powerful bank lobby did not oppose the "enabling" federal legislation. That lobby would almost certainly have opposed any serious attempt at diffusing stock ownership since it is precisely this issue--disintermediation--that the banks have lobbied against for so many years. However, the GSOC legislation promises to cut banks in on the subsidy (at least those banks who win the favor of the GSOC directors).

Under scrupulous and cold-blooded financial management, it might be possible to hold the subsidy diversions to a minimum. But to do so, the GSOC's directors must turn a deaf ear to the pleas of special interest groups. It is to be expected, however, that the GSOC directors will be besieged with requests for help from particular firms or industries that might be deemed essential to the State or local economy. Moreover, the subsidy diversion would be largely hidden in the sense that the GSOC still would be able to show a "profit" as long as it retains enough of the subsidy. Thus it may be difficult for GSOC directors to defend a decision to "support" some firms and some banks but not others. Such dilemmas always raise the possibility that political or other nonfinancial factors may influence the operating decisions of a GSOC.

In sum, while supporters may yet be able to show that GSOC benefits outweigh the additional costs that a State must bear under the federal "enabling"

legislation, thus far, little evidence has been offered in support of that contention. Instead, the case that has been presented is long on moral posturing, and long on railing against the sorry state of affairs that now exists, but painfully short in terms of sound economic reasoning that would lead one to believe that a GSOC offers any reasonable hope of achieving the expressed objectives. If left unattended, the existing biases in the federal legislation would funnel benefits to existing capitalists, as stockholders in banks and capital intensive firms, and to new GSOC bureaucrats, leaving an as yet undetermined fraction for (excess) distribution to citizen-shareholders. Even this distribution is regressive in the sense that the federal tax savings is greater for those in higher tax brackets. Since the same citizens must pay for the State subsidies (as well as their portion of the federal subsidy) either in the form of increased taxes or in the form of increased inflation (assuming that taxes are not raised), it is far from clear that the benefits outweigh the costs for any group of citizens. It should be clear, however, that the society as a whole loses since new costs are created but no new revenues are created to pay for those costs.

In the absence of "clarifying" analysis, the decision before the Alaska State Legislature appears to be one of whether or not to assist capital intensive firms in recovering part of the taxes they currently pay to the federal and State government. If so, a GSOC might be an appropriate vehicle, one that would also benefit selective banks and would create supporting jobs through its own bureaucracy. If sufficiently subsidized through tax benefits, loan guarantees, etc., a GSOC might even produce a modest excess cash flow to citizen-shareholders. However, if this is the ultimate goal, the State would be far better off to scrap the proposal for a costly administrative structure (the GSOC) and eliminate the subsidy diversions by simply distributing to its citizens the equivalent of the

proposed State subsidies to the GSOC. If it is deemed essential that checks be considered as "dividend" disbursements rather than as transfer payment (which they will be in either case), then the State might adopt a more ennobling title such as "the return on a citizen's share in State Wealth." It is doubtful that many citizens will feel all that different once they have cashed their checks. Only the banks and the capital intensive firms appear to have a strong financial incentive for favoring the more cumbersome and costly GSOC alternative.

Two-Factor Theory And ESOP Financing

Why, In An Advanced Industrial Economy,
Substantial Income-Producing Capital
Must Be Owned By Corporate Employees

And

How--With Very Slight Changes In Basic
Business Strategy--This Can Be
Effectively Accomplished Through Employee
Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Financing:

- °The Most Potent Instrument For The Purpose
- °The Most Advantageous To The Corporation
- °The Most Beneficial To Employees

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Although two-factor economics is a new and fundamental concept, it is simple and straightforward. The reasoning runs as follows:

1. While it is true that people, participating in the economy through the performance of their various tasks, are a basic source of productive input, they are not the only source of productive input.
2. Non-human things, such as land, structures and machines, also make productive input into the economy.
3. The division of the input sources into two types is both necessary and adequate, because the ownership of labor power cannot be concentrated, while the ownership of non-human things can easily be concentrated. It is, after all, an individual's property in an input factor that entitles him to receive what it produces.
4. Under the logic and morality of a market economy, productive input into the economy is the basis for the individual's right to receive income from it. Economic outtake is conditioned on economic input. To accountants and businessmen, this relationship is simply double-entry bookkeeping. To economists, it is "Say's Law" or "Say's Identity". To moralists, it is the Puritan Ethic, or simply the principle of economic justice defined by Aristotle. To lawyers, it is the principle of private property, under which the owners of capital and the individual owners of labor power are accorded the income equivalent of what each privately-owned input factor contributed to production.

Figure 1: **SAYS LAW THE BASIC LAW OF TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS**

For every dollar spent, somebody gets a dollar in economic value. Say's Law is simply a prose statement of the principle of double-entry bookkeeping, which is the logic of a private property, market economy.

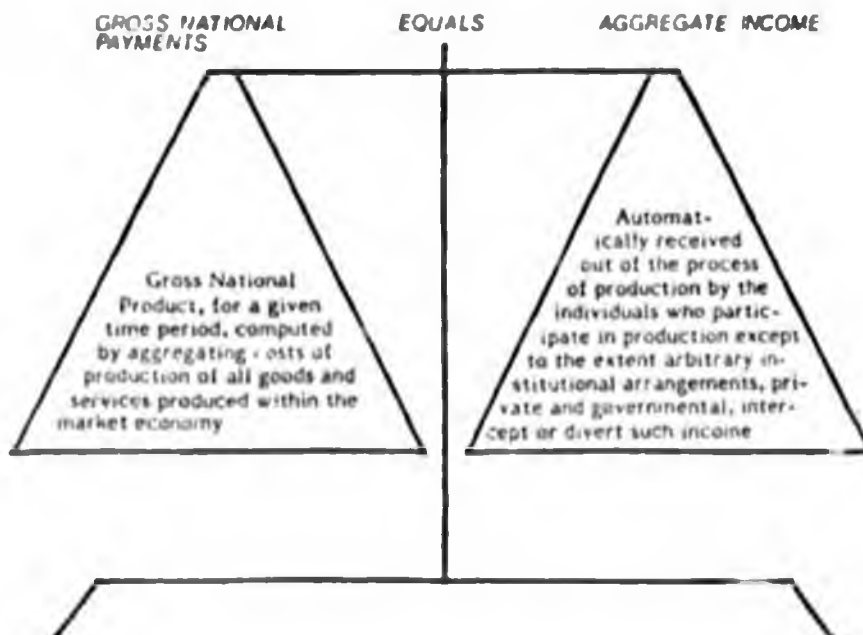


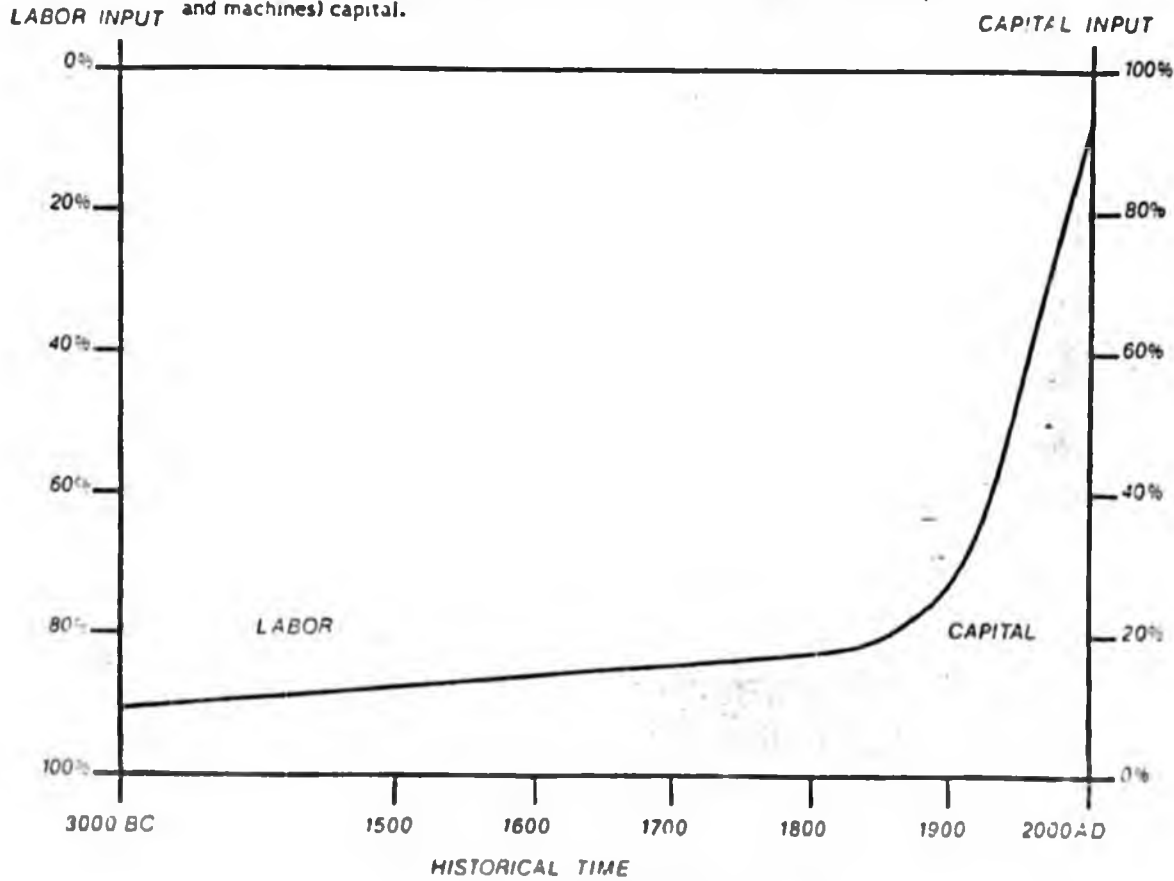
Figure 2: SAY'S LAW ILLUSTRATED ON THE BASIS OF 1973 STATISTICS (IN BILLIONS)

<u>Gross National Product</u>	<u>Pre-tax Income</u>
Less adjustments for capital consumption allowances, indirect business tax and non-tax liability, business transfer payments and other minor adjustments.	Pre-tax Income Automatically Arising out of Production and Received by the Participants in Production
CONSUMER COSTS OF:	INCOME OF PARTICIPANTS IN:
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries \$ 37.8	Agriculture, forest.y, and fisheries \$ 37.8
Mining 9.7	Mining 9.7
Contract construction 57.5	Contract construction 57.5
Manufacturing 291.9	Manufacturing 291.9
Transportation 39.3	Transportation 39.3
Communications 21.7	Communications 21.7
Electric, gas, and sanitary services 19.8	Electric, gas, and sanitary services 19.8
Wholesale and retail trade 151.5	Wholesale and retail trade 151.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate 118.9	Finance, insurance, and real estate 118.9
Services 133.6	Services 133.6
Government and government enterprises 162.9	Government and government enterprises 162.9
Foreign trade and transactions 9.6	Foreign trade and transactions 9.6
\$1,054.3	\$1,054.3

5. Technological advance, which is the phenomenon responsible for the Industrial Revolution, as well as our own automation revolution, and all of the intermediate revolutions brought about by science and technology, changes, and is intended to change, the input mix. It shifts the burden of production off labor (the human factor) and onto capital (the non-human factor). Technological change does not operate directly on labor. It cannot increase the productiveness of an individual worker. It increases the productiveness of machines, tools, structures, land and processes. The economic productiveness of human workers--what they can accomplish with their unaided muscles or minds has not changed during the course of history, if the value of that productiveness is determined objectively and competitively by the free operation of the law of supply and demand.

Figure 3: THE FUNCTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

The function of technological change is to shift the burden of production off the human factor, labor, and onto the non-human factor, (land, structures, and machines) capital.



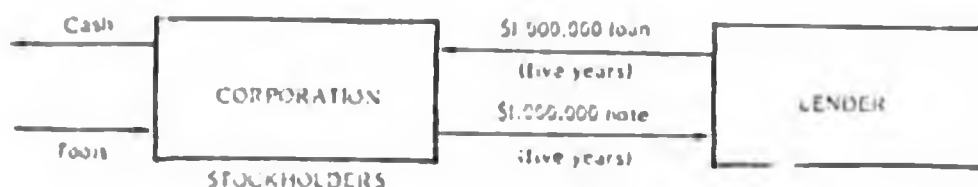
6. In the United States economy, the world's most advanced, the process of technological change has gone so far that most of the goods and services today are produced by capital instruments; only a minor portion of the productive input is made by people. With rare exceptions, it is capital that produces affluence. Labor, in a free labor market, can normally produce only subsistence. The relative distribution of aggregate personal income between workers (roughly 3/4ths) and the owners of capital (1/4th) does not reflect the relatively higher productive input by capital because our governmental economic policy (the Employment Act of 1946), and implementing legislation, attempts to repeal the law of supply and demand as it applies to the value of labor. This is the purpose of minimum wage laws, coercive fixing of wages, vast governmental make-work programs, government subsidies to industry and other government entities to "create" jobs, etc.

The costs of all such efforts enter into the costs of production, directly or indirectly, and thus are inflationary precisely because they are not reflected in the increased production of goods and services by labor. Such costs, neither representing increased labor input nor labor shortages, are, in fact, disguised welfare. They are injected into the costs of the same quantities of goods and services that, prior to the coerces increases, would have been produced at lower costs. These attempts to overvalue labor constitute the monetization of welfare.

7. The shifting of the input mix from labor to capital would cause no economic problem, even under competitive labor markets, if the declining productiveness of labor were offset by increasing capital ownership, i.e., if, as technology diminished the productive role of the human factor, workers simultaneously acquired ownership of enough productive capital to compensate for their loss, or even better, enough capital to provide what few labor-dependent persons have ever achieved, a truly affluent standard of living.
8. Unfortunately, traditional techniques of finance do exactly the reverse of what the situation logically requires. They insure that all newly-formed capital will be automatically owned by those who own all existing capital. Under these techniques, the \$100 billion-plus of new capital formation that comes into existence each year in the U.S. economy becomes owned by a tiny proprietary class--5% of consumer units at most. If averaged over the past 15 years, about 98% of new capital formation in the corporate sector (which produces more than 85% of total private sector goods and services) is financed out of direct cash flow or borrowings repaid out of cash flow.

Figure 4: CONVENTIONAL CORPORATE FINANCE

Including internal cash flow, borrowings repaid from after-tax cash flow, accelerated depreciation, depletion, and investment tax credit, but excluding sale of new stock to the public for cash

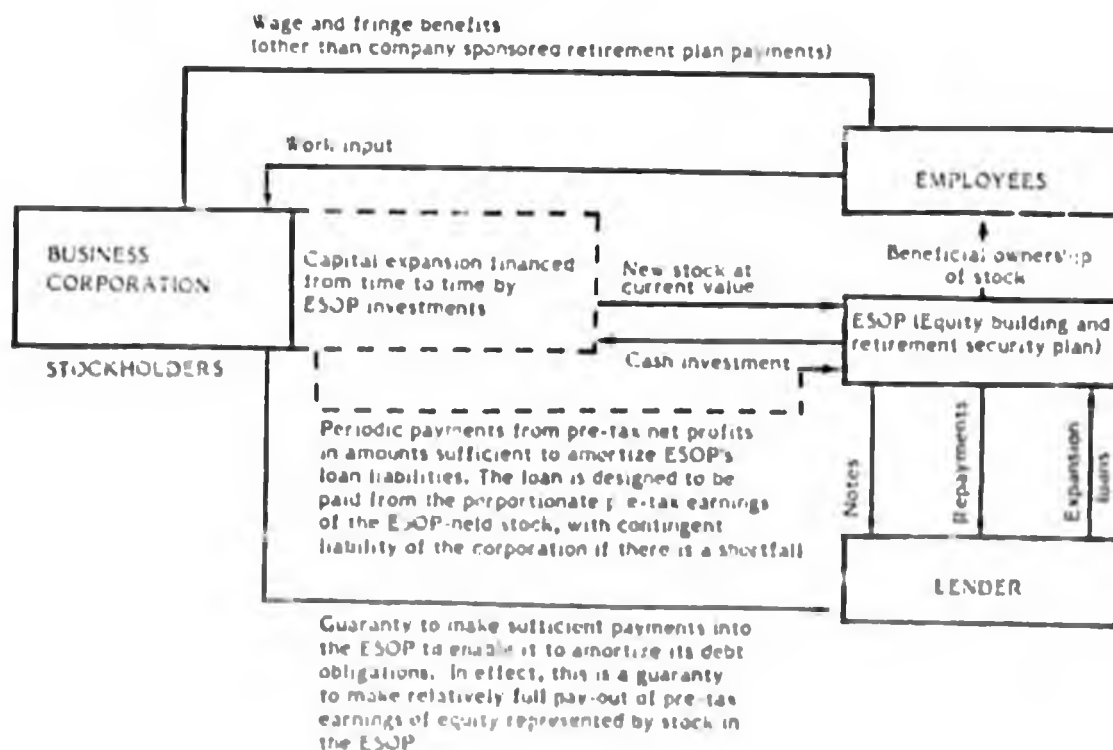


These methods of financing new capital formation have one common characteristic: they do not create a single new stockholder. The portion of new capital formation (about 2%) financed by sale of equity stock to the public does not alter this propensity. Every qualitative study of stock ownership to date shows that ownership of virtually all individually-owned productive capital is lodged in the top 5% of consumer units. These are the families who have excess funds to buy newly-issued stock. Conventional finance has created this monopoly.

- The logic of business finance is to invest in productive capital that will pay for itself within a reasonably short space of time, normally three to five years, and then go on throwing off wealth indefinitely, its productive power being replenished through depreciation funds set aside out of gross income before net income is computed. Two-factor financing techniques, of which the most widely used today is the Employee Stock Ownership Plan or ESOP, makes this logic available to employees.

Figure 5: BUSINESS CORPORATION FINANCED BY A PROPERLY DESIGNED ESOP

Intended to simultaneously (1) finance growth of the corporation, and provide second incomes for the employees (if the stock is dividend paying and, if the shares are paid for, the dividends pass through the ESOP currently to the employees) and (2) to build retirement security in the form of equity capital ownership.

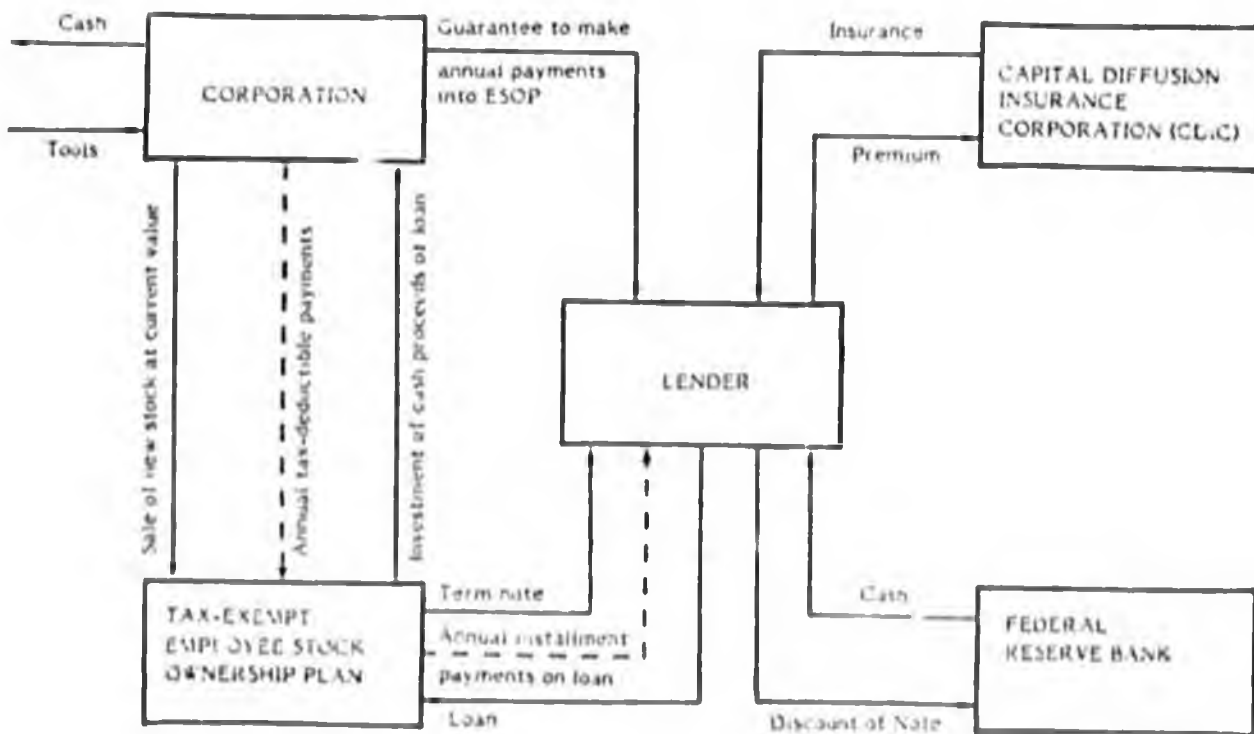


10. ESOP financing, on the one hand, provides low cost capital, through the use of pre-corporate-tax funds, to finance corporate growth, and on the other hand, builds ownership into workers without diminishing their take-home pay or calling upon their small or nonexistent savings.
11. With minor legislative changes to provide capital diffusion insurance (modeled after FHA insurance) for lenders that make sound ownership broadening loans and to make the financing paper held by lenders discountable at a rate not in excess of the administrative costs of the Federal Reserve Bank, two factor techniques provide means for financing unlimited growth, while building market power, economic security, and growing current second incomes from capital* into the masses of workers; thus the market power of potential consumers rises in step with the productive output of the economy.

*Where the stock in the ESOP pays a dividend, the plan often provides that, after each particular share of stock is paid for, the dividends on it shall currently pass through the trust into the workers' pockets.

Figure 6: FINANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Financing economic growth by monetizing productive capital while building market power into consumers through ESOP financing

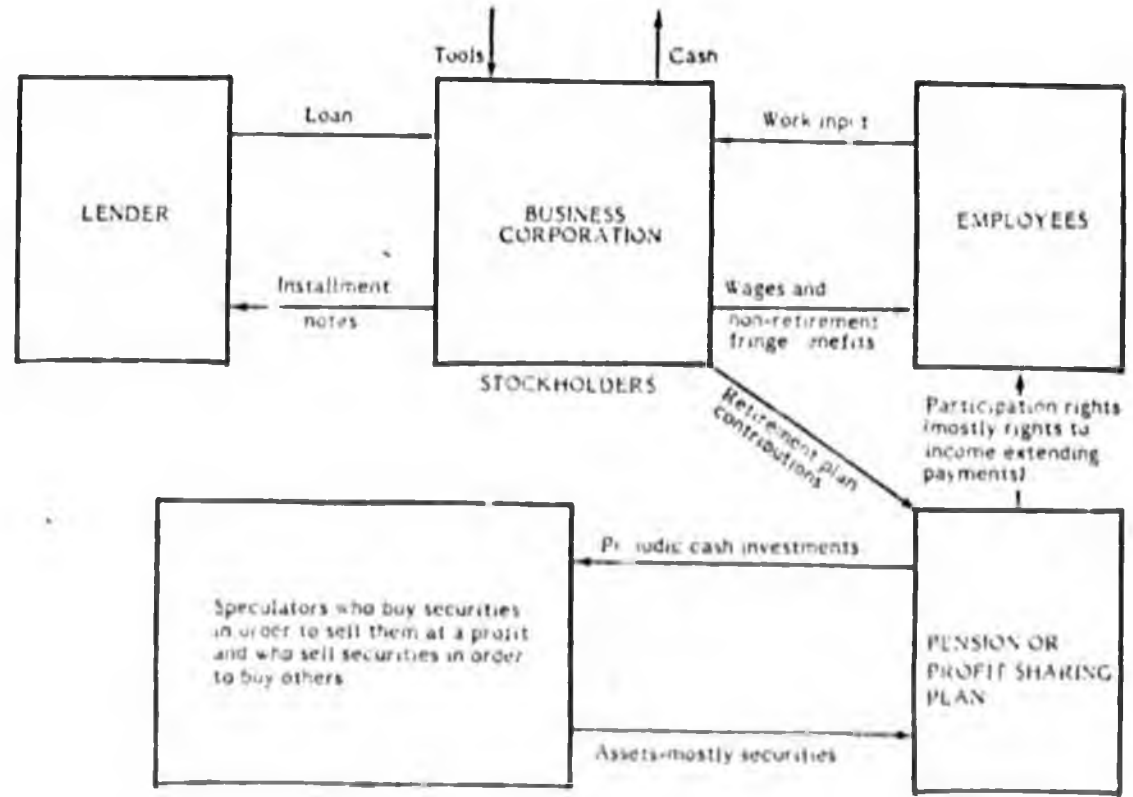


12. Inflation is eliminated. Institutional barriers, such as lack of "money" to finance solid, self-liquidating economic growth are eliminated; legitimate leisure, built upon the ownership of a holding of productive capital that will enable a man or woman to produce a viable income, becomes possible over a reasonable working lifetime; and the burden of public taxes imposed upon producers to support the non-productive and under-productive can ultimately be virtually eliminated. Fully productive households and individuals do not need to be subsidized.

13. The ESOP is an enormous cost-saver for the corporation which--sooner or later--can substitute it for a fixed-benefit pension plan, or any other pension plan or conventional profit-sharing plan. All payments by the corporation into these conventional plans are pure cost.

Figure 7: CONVENTIONAL FINANCING OF A BUSINESS CORPORATION

Conventional financing of a business corporation, other than by sale of new stock to the public for cash, with conventional pension or profit sharing plans invested wholly in assets purchased from sources other than the employer-corporation.

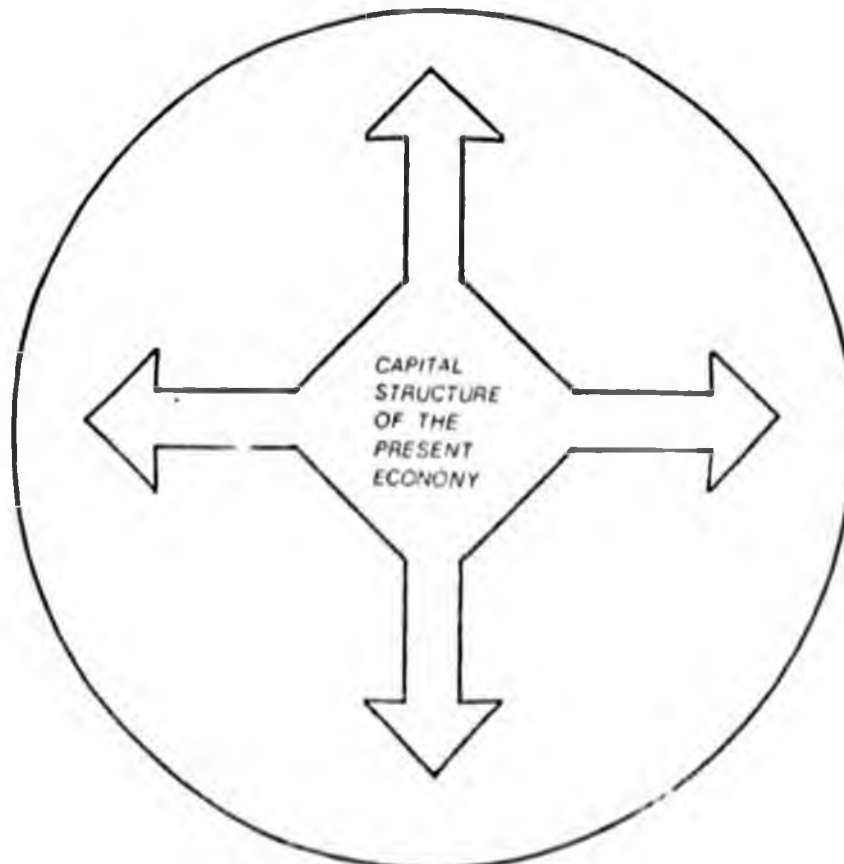


Compared with the ESOP (see Figure 5), not only does the identical dollar paid by the corporation to build stock ownership into employees also finance corporate growth, but corporate growth can be accomplished on pre-tax dollars. By comparing the ESOP (Figure 5) with conventional economic security-building plans (Figure 7), you will see that the ESOP enables the corporation to gain \$3 of advantage for each dollar spent. And it conforms to the sound economic goal of enabling employees, who work hard and well over a reasonable working lifetime, to retire singularly well off.

14. Finally, because the economic goal implicit in Two-Factor Theory is to expand the U.S. economy (and any other economy that adopts it) sufficiently to enable all consumers to live well--general affluence--while also producing the technology to protect the environment, a change to a two-factor policy by business and government could give us twenty-five years or more of legitimate full employment. This would be time enough for society to adjust to a world in which each person will spend less time in economic work and more time in the work of civilization.

Figure 8: OBJECTIVE OF TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS

Capital structure of the present economy, owned by 5% of consumers, expands ten-fold to create the SECOND ECONOMY, owned primarily by the 95% of consumers who now own no capital



SUGGESTED READING ON TWO-FACTOR ECONOMICS

Books

THE CAPITALIST MANIFESTO by Louis O. Kelso and Mortimer J. Adler (Originally published by Random House, New York, 1958. Republished 1975 and presently available through Greenwood Press, 57 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880, Tel. (203) 226-3571.)

THE NEW CAPITALISTS by Louis O. Kelso and Mortimer J. Adler (Originally published by Random House, New York, 1961. Republished 1975 and presently available through Greenwood Press, 57 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880, Tel. (203) 226-3571.)

TWO-FACTOR THEORY: THE ECONOMICS OF REALITY by Louis O. Kelso and Patricia Hetter (Random House, New York, 1967; Paperback Edition, Vintage Press, 1968)

Testimony

Testimony by Louis O. Kelso before the Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, December 11-12, 1975, on "Employee Stock Ownership Plan Financing and Other Financing Concepts Based on Two-Factor Economics"

Testimony by Louis O. Kelso, Norman G. Kurland and Patricia Hetter before the Senate Finance Committee, U.S. Congress, March 31, 1976, on "Major Tax Revisions and Extension of Expiring Tax Cut Provisions"

Reports and Publications

"ESOPs: An Analytical Report" prepared for the Profit Sharing Council of America, Chicago, Illinois, by Hewitt Associates, Deerfield, Illinois

"Employee Stock Ownership Plans" prepared by The Committee of Publicly Owned Companies, New York, New York

"A Symposium on Employee Stock Ownership Plans", The American University Law Review, Spring 1977, Volume 26, No. 3, prepared by The Washington College of Law, American University, Washington, D.C.

"Making New Capitalists -- A Creative Response to Income Inequities" prepared by the 1977-78 Twentieth Session, Executive Seminar in National and International Affairs, Department of State

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SCHOOL OF LAW

DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616

April 4, 1979

The Honorable Mike Miller
Chairman
State Affairs Committee
Alaska State House of Representatives
Pouch "V" State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Chairman Miller:

I am enclosing the promised specific, suggested amendments to SSHB 240 which are addressed to the questions of accountability of the Board, the rights of shareholders, and procedures for Board and Board Committee meetings. In each instance I have attempted to describe the content of the proposed amendment and to offer an explanation of why I hold the view that such an amendment would be desirable. I have then attempted to break the amendment down into its component ideas and to give the Committee an opportunity to vote them up or down. My further function in this regard is then to draft statutory language which carries into effect the decisions of your Committee.

A number of critical questions concerning SSHB 240 are not addressed in this transmission. We have yet to discuss the regulation of proxies, their content and the vexing issue of how they will be financed. If the legislature desires to influence these thorny problems, now is the only opportunity. Another unfinished item is the future political activities of the GSOC. We can anticipate substantial first amendment problems if we embark on a project to muzzle the directors in their individual capacities. If the directors can speak to the public, the limitation on the "corporation's political activities" is, at best, theoretical. Working on this problem should present quite a challenge!

Finally, there are the proposals I advanced on the first evening of my testimony regarding criminal liability of directors in certain instances. I will work on these in the course of the next week.

If I may offer a suggestion: As I spend more and more time with SSHB 240 and the Alaska Business Corporations Act the more I become convinced that the better course is not to amend the existing corporations code to make room for the GSOC, but to begin anew and design a fully developed Code to regulate the GSOC, a set of laws designed with the special attributes of a general stock ownership corporation in mind and not as an afterthought. This project sounds bigger than it will turn out to be. I sincerely believe that working with your staff people it could be accomplished in a matter of weeks although I would prefer to have the summer months to fine-tune the statute but, in the final analysis, having come this far with you, I am the servant of the Committee.

I hope that this material proves of use to the Committee. When you have reached your decisions simply mail them back to me and I will sit down and draft the content of suggested legislation.

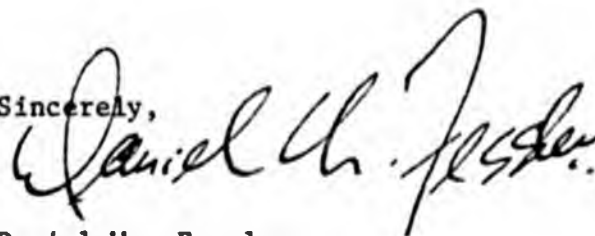
The Honorable Mike Miller
Chairman
State Affairs Committee

April 4, 1979

May I take this opportunity to thank you, the other members of the Committee, the various nonmembers who sat in on our discussions and the staff people for a splendid experience. People here have remarked that they have never seen me so energetic. One student commented that I seem to be following the "North Star." In any event, it has been an experience beyond the imagination of the scriptwriters for the "Paper Chase." I thank you all.

Best personal regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel Wm. Fessler". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Daniel Wm. Fessler
Professor of Law

DWF:hf

Enclosures

1 TO: THE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE ALASKA HOUSE OF
2 REPRESENTATIVES
3 FROM: Professor Daniel Wm. Fessler, King Hall, the Law School of the
4 University of California at Davis
5 SUBJECT: Suggested Amendments to Sponsor Substitute for House Bill 240:
6 "An Act Creating the Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation;
7 and providing for an effective date."
8 DATE: April 4, 1979

8 Preliminary statement: At the conclusion of my appearance before the
9 Committee last week I agreed with the members to prepare a series of written
10 proposals for your consideration. Depending upon the sentiment of this body I
11 will be directed in the drawing of amendments to the Sponsor's Substitute for
12 House Bill No. 240. As will quickly become evident, it is time for the
13 Committee to make some basic choices concerning the nature of the General Stock
14 Ownership Corporation which it may wish to pass to the floor for consideration
15 in the whole House. The suggestions which follow represent nothing beyond the
16 scope of our discussion last week unless specifically indicated as "NEW." In
17 each instance I will set forth the proposal and a brief statement illustrating
18 specifically what it is that I am suggesting be accomplished if you elect to
19 follow my recommendation.

20
21 I. SUGGESTIONS DESIGNED TO MAKE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE
22 DESIRES OF SHAREHOLDERS OF THE GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION:
23

24 My perception of the need for revision: The pending proposal is that the
25 legislature create the AGSOC as a "private" corporation essentially regulated
26 under the terms of Chapter 05 of the Alaska Statutes (The Alaska Business
27 Corporation Act). As I indicated in my testimony, this general statute is a
28 bare bones version of the "Model Act" which is, in turn, fashioned after the

1 Illinois Business Corporation Act. Its essential feature is to give a corpora-
2 tion a license to create a very strong board of directors, a board which is
3 effectively insulated from shareholder pressure during its tenure in office.

4 This is a crucial assertion. Once this corporation is created and
5 deemed "private" the legislature will part with its major chance to have an
6 effective voice in the behavior of such an instrumentality. If the GSOC is a
7 successful economic venture the power of that unchecked body will rise
8 dramatically and its ability to pursue conduct which subsequent legislatures
9 may deplore is a real danger which ought to concern this present body.

10 Why is the board of directors of a corporation organized under a
11 statutory framework such as the Model Act virtually unchecked in these circum-
12 stances? To begin our assessment we should think in terms of the content of
13 three documents: the statutory framework, the articles of incorporation, and
14 the bylaws. It is no accident that the Kelso Report presents this legislature
15 with a package containing a recommended content for each of these essential
16 documents. Here is a point the Kelso Report does not stress: the legislature
17 has control only over the statutory framework (the enabling legislation now
18 before the Committee). Once the GSOP is formed by this legislation, the
19 incorporators (See, Sec. 10.50.010(a), p. 1 SSHB 240) will adopt the articles
20 of incorporation and it will then be beyond the powers of this or subsequent
21 legislatures to interfere with the content of that fundamental document. Once
22 the incorporators have elected themselves as the initial board of directors
23 (See, Sec. 10.50.030(b), p. 3 SSHB 240), they will act in that capacity to
24 adopt the content of the bylaws. Again, it will be too late for the legisla-
25 ture to exert its will. Thus unless changes are made you will have surrendered
26 to these nine appointed individuals sole determination over the content of the
27 documents which will become the framework in which the corporation will
28 actually be structured and function. Your only chance for effective influence

1 is with respect to the content of the statute. If you adopt the current
2 content of House Bill 240, you will hand these appointed individuals (only a
3 majority of whom need be Alaskans) a blank check to narrow their accountability
4 to all of the citizens of this state in their capacities as shareholders in the
5 GSOC. The express terms of SSHB 240 already give to this Board the strong
6 power position of "classification" meaning that the directors will serve three
7 year terms with the nine members segregated into three classes so that only one
8 third of the membership is up for election by the shareholders at each annual
9 meeting. (See, 10.50.030(a)(b), pp. 2-3 SSHB 240). There is a pragmatic
10 advantage in this proposed classification in that insures to the incumbent
11 board the continuity inherent in the fact that a working majority of the Board
12 will not be facing election. There is also a grave danger. Such a Board
13 could ignore the wishes of a majority of the shareholders and yet maintain
14 effective control and management over the corporation for two years. The
15 people in their role as shareholders would be powerless. This body in its
16 role as representative of the people would be equally powerless. True, it
17 could deny the GSOC cooperation to the extent that it was requesting the
18 legislature to call for an election to authorize a state guarantee of GSOC debt
19 instruments (although see the Memorandum of Attorney General Cross under date
20 of March 20, 1979, raising a question as to whether recourse to the people
21 would actually be required). Yet this is a very indirect way of attempting to
22 discipline the Board or correct the excesses of that body as viewed from the
23 perspective of the legislature. I do not wish to belabor the point: if the
24 members of this House feel that a different distribution of power as between
25 the shareholders and the board, and as between the GSOC and the government of
26 Alaska is desired . . . now is the time to act and the content of the enabling
27 legislation is the proper forum for that action.

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1 PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL DIRECTORS AND
2 THE BOARD AS AN ENTITY:

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PROPOSAL NUMBER ONE: THAT DIRECTORS BE SUBJECT TO REMOVAL BY ORDER OF A SUPERIOR COURT UPON SUIT BY 100 OR MORE SHAREHOLDERS OF THE GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION.

I propose that the enabling legislation be amended to provide that a superior court may, at the suit of 100 shareholders or more or upon petition of the attorney general, remove from office any director in case of fraudulent or dishonest acts or gross abuse of authority or discretion with reference to the corporation and may bar from reelection any director so removed for a period prescribed by the court. In any such proceeding the corporation should be made a party to the action.

Explanation: This proposal is based upon Section 304 of the 1977 California Act with two important modifications: first, I propose that you alter the "standing requirement" from California's [". . . shareholders holding at least 10 percent of the number of outstanding shares. . . ."] to one hundred shareholders. To follow the California percentage would be most unreal given the total diffusion of shareholdings in the CSOC (one share per resident). It would require a petition of 40,000 Alaskans or more! In any other private corporation it is perfectly possible for a single shareholder to own 10% or more of the outstanding shares and thus have standing under the California Act. Requiring one hundred Alaskans to join in this suit should ensure that a single angry shareholder could not inaugurate a vexatious complaint. The second modification is to specially grant to the Attorney General standing

1 to initiate this removal litigation. I do this because while the attorney
2 general may well have personal standing as a resident of Alaska to join in
3 such a suit we must recognize that litigation may be costly and that
4 frequently only the office of the attorney general may have the human and
5 financial resources to prosecute a removal suit upon which may depend the
6 welfare of the corporation (and with that, welfare and interests of
7 Alaskans).

8 Now it must be immediately evident that this type of removal can only
9 be for the most gross violations of the fiduciary responsibilities assumed
10 by a director and that the statute only grants standing to potential
11 litigants and subject matter jurisdiction to the superior courts.
12 Naturally, the plaintiffs would have to prove the allegations of their
13 complaint by a preponderance of the evidence before the superior court
14 would be warranted in exercising the power vested in it by this statute.
15 I should add that it is quite possible that if the legislature does not
16 act to provide for removal of directors in circumstances such as are
17 covered by this proposal, a superior court might entertain such suits on
18 a theory that such a grave matter is within the court's inherent juris-
19 diction. There is precedent. See, California Fruit Growers' Assn. v.
20 Superior Court, 8 Cal.App. 711, 97 Pac 769 (1908). In my opinion, this
21 is not a desirable alternative because the legislature would be without
22 control over the vital questions of who had standing to initiate the
23 litigation and what would be deemed sufficient grounds for this grave
24 remedy.

25 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor
26 in principle the concept of having directors subject to
27 removal by order of a superior court? YES ____ NO ____ . If
28 "yes," is the Committee in favor of the proposed formula

1 granting standing only to one hundred or more shareholders?

2 YES ____ NO ____ . Does the Committee favor granting standing
3 to the Attorney General of Alaska to initiate a removal suit?

4 YES ____ NO ____ .

5
6 PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO: THAT ANY DIRECTOR OR THE ENTIRE BOARD MAY BE
7 REMOVED BY THE SHAREHOLDERS WITHOUT CAUSE.

8 I propose that at any annual meeting or a special
9 meeting properly noticed for the purpose at which a
10 quorum is present, a majority of the shares voting in
11 person or by proxy may remove the entire board and elect
12 replacement directors. I further propose that the share-
13 holders have power to remove less than the entire board
14 provided there are appropriate safeguards to minimize
15 the chance that an angry faction of shareholders could
16 oust a single director.

17 Explanation: Both California and Delaware have found it expedient to
18 pass recent legislation enabling shareholders who have lost confidence in
19 the Board of Directors to remove either the entire Board or individual
20 members at a meeting especially called and noticed to entertain such a
21 motion, and that such removal may be for any cause deemed sufficient by a
22 majority of the shares. In both California and Delaware, the statutes
23 grant the right of removal to an absolute majority of the shares (50% plus
24 1 share). Again, we must recognize that there may be individuals or
25 institutional shareholders who, though a handful in number, would command
26 an absolute majority of the outstanding shares. Such a potential
27 coalition of large shareholders is a strong check upon the Board of
28 directors. Unfortunately, there will be no such potential shareholder

1 coalition in the GSOC. We must deal with the fundamental characteristic
2 of a corporate entity, the shares of which are held in lots of one . . .
3 and by more than 400,000 individuals.

4 The Kelso Report recognizes the problem of human inertia inherent in
5 such diffuse shareholdings when it proposes to set a quorum for share-
6 holder attendance at annual and special meetings at one-third of the
7 shares voting either in person or by proxy (an absentee ballot). At any
8 meeting at which such a quorum is ascertained to be present, a vote of a
9 majority of that quorum is sufficient to elect directors. Simple arith-
10 metic will reveal that a simple majority of one-third is one-sixth of the
11 shares plus one. Such a scheme is permitted by Sec. 10.05.153 of the
12 Alaska Business Corporation Act if the articles of incorporation are so
13 drafted. I favor this aspect of the proposed articles contained in the
14 Kelso Report because I fear that setting a higher quorum requirement might
15 preclude the shareholders from effectively meeting. How then does this
16 guide us as to the machinery for removal of directors by shareholder vote?
17 I propose that the entire board might be removed for any reason either at
18 an annual or special meeting of shareholders for which notice of such a
19 proposal had been given (as provided in Sec. 10.05.141) upon the vote of a
20 majority of a quorum of the shares present in person or by proxy.

21 If the shareholders desire to remove less than the entire board, we
22 have a different problem. Here is a danger that a special interest group
23 or other faction might attempt to gang up on a single director for his or
24 her policies and seek to accomplish this at a special meeting which may
25 well be attended by fewer shares than were present at the annual meeting
26 which elected the targeted director. We can guard against this possibility
27 by drafting the statute to provide that in the event that there is an
28 attempt to remove less than the entire board, the resolution shall fail

1 unless the number of shares cast for removal exceeds the number of shares
2 which originally elected the director. Thus if he was elected by a
3 majority of 261,000 shares at an annual meeting, a special meeting noticed
4 to entertain a removal resolution would not accomplish that objective
5 unless 261,001 shares voted "yes" (in person or by proxy) on that question.
6 If the director was appointed (as in the case of the initial Board), or
7 elected by the Board to fill a vacancy arising by death, incapacity, or
8 resignation mid-term, I would propose that a simple majority of a quorum
9 would be sufficient to remove that director.

10 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor
11 in principle the concept of having directors susceptible of
12 removal by vote of the shareholders? YES ____ NO ____ . If
13 so, is the Committee content with the suggested formula for
14 that removal? YES ____ NO ____ .

15
16 PROPOSAL NUMBER THREE: THAT THE ENABLING ACT REGULATE THE STANDING OF
17 SHAREHOLDERS TO INAUGURATE ACTIONS AGAINST DIRECTORS OR OFFICERS BROUGHT
18 FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CORPORATION (SHAREHOLDER'S DERIVATIVE ACTIONS)

19 I propose that the enabling act be amended to regulate
20 the standing of shareholders to inaugurate actions seeking
21 declaratory relief or money damages as against officers and
22 directors of the GSOC for the benefit of the corporation
23 (shareholder's derivative actions); lodge discretion in the
24 superior court respecting whether and in what amount a security
25 bond for expenses of litigation should be required of such a
26 plaintiff; preclude non-judicially approved out-of-court
27 settlements of such actions; and, provide for an accounting
28 to the corporation of any proceeds received by the litigating

1 shareholder(s) whether by judgment, settlement, or compromise.

2 Explanation: One of the most important developments in the past half
3 century in seeking to hold directors and officers accountable for harm
4 they bring upon the corporation is the concept of the shareholders' action
5 or derivative suit. If you adopt the hypothesis that the Board or certain
6 of its members is guilty of action or inaction which has brought great
7 harm to the GSOC and which violates the duties of care or loyalty to the
8 corporation, it is unrealistic to assume that those very directors will
9 authorize or encourage corporate counsel to bring an action naming them as
10 defendants! For this reason it is necessary to give individual share-
11 holders the right to bring the litigation in the name of the corporation.
12 Any recovery of money, damages goes to the corporate treasury, not to the
13 litigating shareholder (save for reimbursing him/her for the costs of the
14 litigation).

15 Nearly every jurisdiction permits such actions and most regulate the
16 conduct of such litigation by statute. Alaska is one of the few juris-
17 dictions which permits but does not regulate by statute. Fortunately, the
18 Supreme Court has acted to fill this void by providing in Rule 23.1 of the
19 Civil Rules certain regulations for derivative actions by shareholders.
20 (Added by Supreme Court Order 258, November 16, 1976.) The Alaska rule is
21 predicated upon and nearly identical to Rule 23.1 of the Federal Rules of
22 Civil Procedure. In my opinion, it does not go far enough in policing
23 derivative actions by shareholders in the context of the General Stock
24 Ownership Corporation.

25 The matters which should be covered by statute include:

26 * Who among the shareholders may bring such an action?

27 I suggest that standing be limited to a shareholder who held his or
28 her share at the time of the transaction of which complaint is made

1 else an unscrupulous shareholder might merely "buy a lawsuit." And
2 standing should be limited to a shareholder or shareholders with
3 sufficient resources to be able to vigorously prosecute the action
4 since a judgment will bind all of the other shareholders by its
5 result.

6 * Should the shareholder be required to exhaust intra-corporate
7 remedies (e.g., make a demand upon the Board that it bring the
8 action) as a precondition to commencing the action?

9 Modern statutes do not require the shareholder to make demands upon
10 the Board if that would be a futile act (e.g., if the directors are
11 named as the defendants it is unlikely that they would respond to the
12 demand by directing suit against themselves). Thus, I would propose
13 that the shareholder be required to make demand upon the Board for
14 corrective action or to allege in his complaint before the superior
15 court the reasons why he deems such a demand to be a futile gesture.

16 * Should the shareholder be required to post a bond as a
17 precondition to maintaining any derivative action?

18 Defending a derivative action is time consuming and expensive and
19 there is always a danger that a shareholder will bring an ill-
20 founded or vexatious action simply to harass management or in the
21 hope that he will be "bought off" with an out-of-court settlement.
22 To minimize the instance of such "strike suits," many states in the
23 1940's adopted the practice of requiring a litigating shareholder to
24 post a bond as a precondition to maintaining the action, a bond which
25 would hold the defendants harmless against their costs of litigation
26 (including attorney's fees) in the event the shareholder should fail
27 to prevail. There is no current Alaska law on this point. Rule 23.1
28 is silent. My suggestion is that the Committee borrow the best

1 features of modern California and New York statutes on striking a
2 balance on this vital question. Section 800 of the California Act
3 leaves the trial court with substantial discretion to entertain a
4 timely motion from defendants for the posting of such security. Thus
5 the court could consider the nature of the plaintiff's allegations
6 and project the likelihood of success. It would then exercise sound
7 discretion in requiring that a bond be posted or in denying the
8 request of the defendants. If a bond is required the court has
9 further discretion to determine the amount of the bond. California
10 presently limits the bond to a sum not more than \$50,000. This
11 ceiling is viewed as posing some protection against a judge who would
12 simply price the plaintiff out of court with a bond requirement
13 substantially beyond reasonable means. Again, the California Act
14 provides that the amount of the bond may be raised or lowered (subject
15 to the \$50,000 ceiling) at any time during the course of the litiga-
16 tion upon the motion of either party or upon the court's own
17 initiative as it seems the interests of fairness to require.

18 * Should the shareholder who has commenced a derivative action be
19 allowed to compromise or "settle out of court"?

20 No, not in my opinion. This is very dangerous and tolerates "strike
21 suits"--actions commenced with no solid ground but with the hope that
22 management will tire of the time and expense of defending the litiga-
23 tion and "buy plaintiff off." New York is far ahead of other juris-
24 dictions in warding off this danger. No action in the nature of a
25 derivative suit may be settled or compromised without the approval of
26 the court in which it was commenced and without notice to the other
27 shareholders. This last feature is essential to protect the interests
28 of both the court and the other shareholders. The court is protected

1 for a judicially approved settlement precludes any shareholder from
2 attempting to relitigate the same questions. The notice requirement
3 permits other shareholders to come forward and object either to the
4 terms of the proposed settlement or to offer to take up the suit and
5 carry it forward in the event of an afterarising unwillingness of the
6 original litigant.

7 * Should the litigating shareholder in all circumstances be forced
8 to account to the corporation for any proceeds realized from such
9 an action?

10 Yes. In all jurisdictions this is mandatory if the court returns a
11 judgment against the defendant officers or directors. All proceeds
12 of the judgment are paid into the corporate treasury on the theory
13 that the action has vindicated harm done to the corporation and not
14 the litigating shareholder. The shareholder receives an allowance
15 from these funds sufficient to cover the costs of the litigation.
16 But what if the resolution is by way of an informal settlement? This
17 is the dark side of this type of litigation. Frequently shareholders
18 are offered a tidy sum (e.g., \$20,000) if they will dismiss their
19 suit. They keep the money and none of the other shareholders are the
20 wiser. New York simply prevents this. There can be no informal
21 settlement. Any dismissal predicated upon a compromise must be pre-
22 sented to the court, its terms noticed to the other shareholders, and
23 any proceeds paid into the corporate treasury.

24 If all of these features are incorporated into the enabling act, I am
25 of the view that Alaska will have the best of all possible positions with
26 the virtue of derivative actions and none of the vices inherent in strike
27 litigation.

28 / / / / /

1 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor in
2 principle the concept of permitting derivative actions by share-
3 holders in the General Stock Ownership Corporation? YES ___ NO ___.

4 If "yes," does the Committee favor regulating the derivative action
5 by special provisions in the enabling act? YES ___ NO ___. If
6 "yes," does the Committee favor:

7 * The suggested standing rules? YES ___ NO ___.

8 * The suggested provision on exhaustion of intra corporate
9 remedies? YES ___ NO ___.

10 * The suggested provision on the posting of a security bond
11 for the defendants' costs of litigation? YES ___ NO ___.

12 * The suggestion that there be no compromise or dismissal of
13 such an action without court approval? YES ___ NO ___.

14 * The suggested provision that the litigating shareholder in
15 all circumstances be forced to account to the corporation
16 for any proceeds realized from such a derivative action?
17 YES ___ NO ___.

18
19 11. PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO AND THE
20 POTENTIAL ROLE OF SHAREHOLDERS IN THE GENERAL STOCK OWNERSHIP CORPORATION.

21
22 PROPOSAL NUMBER FOUR: THAT THE ENABLING ACT BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE
23 LIABILITY FOR AN OFFICER OR AGENT WHO WRONGFULLY REFUSES TO ALLOW A SHARE-
24 HOLDER, OR A SHAREHOLDER'S AGENT OR ATTORNEY, TO EXAMINE AND MAKE
25 EXTRACTS FROM CORPORATE BOOKS AND RECORDS.

26 I propose that an officer or agent who refuses to allow
27 a shareholder or the agent or attorney of a shareholder to
28 examine and make extracts from corporate books and records

1 of account, minutes, and record of shareholders, for a
2 proper purpose be made liable to the aggrieved shareholder
3 for the penal sum of \$1,000 in addition to other damages or
4 remedy given such shareholder by law.

5 Explanation: Currently Sec. 10.05.240 of the Alaska Business
6 Corporations Act confers upon shareholders a right to examine books and
7 records. Section 10.05.243 provides a penalty for any officer or agent
8 of the corporation who refuses to permit this inspection. Unfortunately,
9 the penalty there provided (10% of the value of the shares owned by the
10 aggrieved shareholder), is not much of a sanction in the context of the
11 GSOC. In other contexts it may be very effective for it is obvious that
12 the larger the number of shares owned by the aggrieved shareholder the
13 more substantial are the consequences of denying the right of inspection.
14 But a shareholder in the GSOC can never own more than 10 shares. Thus I
15 propose to follow the current content of Alaska law in all particulars
16 save for suggesting that a flat penal sum of \$1,000 be established as the
17 sanction.

18 The effective use of any of the shareholder checks upon management
19 which are set forth in Suggestions One, Two and Three depend upon an
20 effective ability to gain information as to the conduct of corporate
21 affairs by the officers and the Board. Thus an effective right of
22 inspection is essential. Indeed, the Committee might desire to see the
23 penal sum imposed for each day there is a wrongful denial of the statutory
24 right of inspection conferred by Sec. 10.05. 240.

25 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor the
26 concept of a statutory right of shareholders in the General Stock
27 Ownership Corporation to inspect corporate books and records?

28 YES ____ NO ____ . Should this sum be levied: (a) per

1 refusal _____; or, for each day of a refusal _____?

2
3 PROPOSAL NUMBER FIVE: THAT THE SHAREHOLDERS BE GIVEN THE POWER TO
4 INITIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS.

5 The current statutes in Alaska provide that the articles
6 may restrict the power to adopt, amend, and repeal bylaws to
7 the Board of Directors. The Kelso Report recommends articles
8 which do so restrict the power to the Board and it is likely
9 that this is what a Board would do. I propose that the
10 enabling act be amended to reserve a power of adoption,
11 amendment or repeal of the bylaws to the vote or written
12 assent of shareholders entitled to exercise a majority of the
13 voting power of the GSOC. I would also propose that the act
14 permit the Board to enjoy this power save for the fact that
15 the Board could not, on its own motion, repeal or amend
16 a bylaw which had been adopted by vote of the shareholders.

17 Explanation: As was dramatically illustrated by the content of the
18 Kelso Report, the document which is most likely to contain the crucial
19 provisions which govern the structure and operation of the General Stock
20 Ownership Corporation is the bylaws. A significant feature in what is, in
21 my opinion, the excessive grant of power to the Board in SSHB 240 is the
22 potential for vesting this power exclusively in the Board. The balance
23 can be redressed by simply amending the enabling act to provide for a
24 sharing of this power in the case of a General Stock Ownership Corporation.

25 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor
26 the concept of permitting the shareholders to adopt, amend or
27 repeal bylaws in the General Stock Ownership Corporation?

28 YES ____ NO ____ . If "yes," does the Committee favor the

1 suggestion that this power be vested by statute in both the
2 shareholders and the Board? YES ____ NO ____.

3
4 III. PROPOSALS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF BOARD DECISION MAKING.

5
6 PROPOSAL SIX: THAT THE BOARD BE ENABLED TO TRANSACT BUSINESS BY USE OF
7 A CONFERENCE TELEPHONE OR SIMILAR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.

8 Given the significant distances as barriers to travel within the
9 State of Alaska plus the strong likelihood that a minority of the
10 directors will be non-Alaskans, I propose that the enabling act be
11 amended to authorize the board to transact business by use of a
12 conference telephone or similar communications equipment so long as
13 all members participating in such a meeting can hear one another.

14 Explanation: One of the difficulties inherent in a body of nine members
15 is to physically gather them in the same place at the same time for the trans-
16 action of Board business. In large corporate entities this is frequently
17 difficult. The result has been a tendency to permit the Board to divide
18 itself into smaller working committees or an "executive committee" to which is
19 delegated most of the Board's function and authority. There is a price paid
20 for such a solution. Decisions are made without the participation of the full
21 membership. Yet a classical solution is at hand, and from my personal
22 observation, a very familiar aspect of life in Alaska--the use of modern
23 communications equipment to hold board meetings notwithstanding the fact that
24 the members are not in the same place at the same time. Both California and
25 Delaware now permit this and the reported experience is very satisfactory. I
26 would suggest that such a provision be made a permanent amendment to Sec.
27 10.05.198 for all corporations formed in Alaska. It certainly merits adoption
28 in the special case of the GSOC.

1 DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor the
2 concept of permitting the directors to hold meetings via the use
3 of conference telephones or similar communications equipment with
4 participation in such a meeting constituting presence in person?

5 YES ____ NO ____.

6
7 PROPOSAL NUMBER SEVEN: THAT REGARDLESS OF COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS EVERY DIRECTOR
8 HAVE A RIGHT TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS OF ANY COMMITTEE AND BE PRIVY TO ALL BOOKS
9 AND RECORDS.

10 Current Alaska law permits the Board to divide itself into
11 committees including an executive committee and to delegate board
12 functions and authority. I have no quarrel with this concept but
13 do suggest that the enabling act be amended to make it clear that
14 regardless of committee assignments any director shall have the
15 right to attend (but not participate in) any meeting of any
16 committee and to have access to books and records pertaining to
17 the activities or responsibilities of such committees as may,
18 from time to time, be created.

19 Explanation: Again we illustrate what one jurist has termed the
20 "law of laws" . . . that every advantage is purchased at a price. The desire
21 to streamline and specialize the functions of directors is understandable but
22 the price is the exclusion of those directors who are not appointed to key
23 committees. Sometimes this problem assumes serious dimension as those
24 directors who are perceived by the majority as raising vexing questions and
25 airing dissenting views are simply shunted aside by exclusion from committee
26 assignments. The legislature can go some distance toward minimizing this harm
27 by providing by statute a right of each director to attend the meeting of any
28 committee and to have access to books and records.

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DIRECTIONS TO YOUR DRAFTING AIDES: Does the Committee favor
the concept of granting directors a statutory right to attend
the meetings of any Board committee and to have access to minutes
and records? YES ____ NO ____.

END OF THIS TRANSMISSION -- SEPARATE LETTER BEING TRANSMITTED NEXT.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

Robert D. Hamrin

In 1976, the Joint Economic Committee recommended to Congress that it "be made national policy to pursue the goal of broadened capital ownership" and a follow-up staff study concluded that "serious consideration should be given to plans that are open to all individuals."

I wish to congratulate the state of Alaska for taking the first bold steps toward implementing such a plan. I also wish to emphasize that a primary virtue of the proposed AGSOC is its simplicity in dealing with one class of stock distributed equally to all citizens. It is most likely that refinements will be made over time but for now, it is important that a track record begins to be established and people's reactions gauged. I firmly believe that the AGSOC, if established, will long be heralded as the first move toward "economic democracy."

As an economist who has examined all the major ideas for broadening capital ownership, I feel the AGSOC is the right step at the right time. The current national policy for broadening capital ownership, ESOPs and TRASOPs, is good so far as it goes, but that is not far enough since the majority of individuals would not significantly benefit from such employee-centered plans.

The AGSOC would benefit every citizen; it would allow all Alaskans to share directly in their highly productive economy; it should establish a stronger foundation for future economic growth due to the increased consumption demand flowing from the augmented incomes of consumers; it is the best plan for providing a more equitable distribution of income and wealth without disturbing present holdings; and by enabling all citizens to "participate" in production through capital ownership, they should gain a better understanding of the workings of the private enterprise system.

The full text of my prepared statement presents a critique of the Kelso study which focuses on a number of inaccurate statements made in the "economic reasoning" section. My statement also contains some specific comments regarding the AGSOC bill: I question whether an emigrating shareholder, particularly in the first few years, should be allowed to take stock with him; there should be provisions for how the stock shares from future major investments would be distributed as well as for repayment of the loan; the question of who the beneficiaries should be in the future and whether shares should be equally distributed needs to be examined.

Testimony for Division of Legislative Finance
regarding
Alaska General Stock Ownership Corporation (AGSOC)

Robert D. Hamrin

The Right Step at the Right Time

In its 1976 Annual Report, the Joint Economic Committee made the following recommendation to Congress:

To provide a realistic opportunity for more U.S. citizens to become owners of capital, and to provide an expanded source of equity financing for corporations, it should be made national policy to pursue the goal of broadened capital ownership.

Four months later, the Committee published a staff study which after examining numerous means by which to achieve broadened capital ownership concluded:

Since this is a goal for all Americans and not just employees of corporations, serious consideration should be given to plans that are open to all individuals...

Three years later, the state of Alaska is to be congratulated for taking the first bold steps toward implementing such a plan. Talk, especially in Washington, D.C., comes cheap and there is much talk regarding the ills of our society and even a fair amount regarding possible remedies. But 95% of talk ends there. Of the 5% that does result in new policies or actions, 90-95% is simply a replay of old ideas, perhaps slightly modified. Rare, extremely rare, is the example of a bold, creative new solution actually being implemented. This is the primary point that should be remembered in the midst of the specific details which follow.

In the same vein, although a few "complicating" suggestions are offered below, a primary virtue of the proposed plan is its simplicity. It deals with one class of stock distributed equally to all citizens. This is as it should be for the initial general plan for broadened capital ownership.

If, for example, a choice of stocks from a diversified portfolio were offered to households, wise or simply early recipients could quickly deplete the supply of "choice stock" and individuals who are not knowledgeable and perhaps have never owned stock would be handicapped in making wise choices on a diversified portfolio.

The ACSOC, if established, will be long remembered as the first concrete step towards "economic democracy." The intent of this phrase has been incisively portrayed by Winnett Boyd:

If a country in which only a few men and women are citizens is politically unjust, the remedy is not to abolish citizenship but to make all men and women citizens. If an industrialized country in which only a few own all the capital is economically unjust, the remedy is not to abolish private capital but to make it possible for all to become owners of some of it.

An Economic Perspective

Statistics show that in the early 1970s, nearly one out of every eight American families had essentially no financial net worth and the majority had a financial net worth of less than \$10,000. This illustrates the fragile, debt-underwritten affluence of American households and the fact that the economic democracy spoken of above is far from a reality.

If economic democracy is to be the goal, then ESOPs and TPASOPs which constitute the current national policy for broadening capital ownership cannot be the final answer. Because the majority of individuals would not significantly benefit from such employee-centered plans, there is a lack of interest and support for them. This again points to the need for a plan that reaches everyone. There is much to be said for the excitement stemming from a commonly shared experience among all Alaskan citizens that such a plan is likely to generate.

The ACSOC has many attractive features. It can benefit everyone or be targeted to whatever groups may be desired. It does not favor corporate

officers or executives, or persons employed by the most successful or most capital-intensive corporations. It does not force a rift between a worker and his or her union nor does it create a climate in which union leaders might take control of corporations. It does not depend, as ESOPs and TRASOPs do, upon tax subsidies, tax benefits, or the loss of tax revenues.

What the ACSOC does do is most important. It allows all Alaskans to share directly in their highly productive economy, thus increasing purchasing power as more dollars flow as dividends to lower and middle income households. Relatedly, it should establish a stronger foundation for future economic growth which would be stimulated by the increased consumption demand flowing from the augmented incomes of consumers. It also does more in terms of providing a more equitable distribution of income and wealth without disturbing present holdings than any other plan that has been suggested to date. A final important non-economic benefit is that by enabling all citizens to "participate" in production not only through their labor but also through capital ownership, the ACSOC will lead to a better understanding by Alaskans of the workings of the private enterprise system.

Basically, the ACSOC is recognizing that some portion of the state's immense "public wealth" should be distributed directly to the people. The state government can facilitate this by providing a mechanism whereby all individuals have equal access to credit in order to obtain stock on the basis of its anticipated future earnings.

Critique of the Kelso Study

My general reaction to the Kelso study was one of disappointment. In specifying the legal and financial design of the ACSOC, it did not go much

beyond the provisions specified in the Revenue Act of 1978. The other major part - the economic reasoning supporting the bill - was riddled with incorrect statements, some of a serious nature which should be divorced from the considerations on establishing an AGSOC. What was needed was not simply the "design" of an AGSOC but an analysis of it which would specify first why this type of corporation should be established over other means of broadening capital ownership and second its numerous effects.

Before highlighting the incorrect statements in the "economic reasoning" section, I have two questions regarding the design of this project as proposed by Kelso. The first regards his statement on page 5 that the proposed design permits an "emigrating shareholder to take his stock with him in order to continue to enjoy its income in the future." This seems to violate the spirit of the AGSOC proposal. It does not seem right that someone who recently moved to Alaska with the intent of staying only a few years can leave with a share of stock within a couple of years.

The more serious matter regards the question of future financing and distribution of newly created stock. On page 28, the Kelso study discusses new residents purchasing shares from the initial distribution which the corporation had bought back. I could find no discussion, however, of how the shares from a second major investment a few years hence would be distributed. Would just new residents receive such shares? Would all residents receive the shares? If so, would they all receive equal shares? This point needs to be clarified in the bill.

Regarding the economic reasoning section, the most serious problem is the insertion of Kelso's two factor theory contention that we have been operating under one factor (labor) theory and policy: "The notion that labor is the only, or chief, factor of production is the keystone of the

conventional economic wisdom." (p. 17) This is patently false as capital has been at the forefront of economic analysis for most of this century. The danger is that linking the ACSOC to two-factor theory would instantly discredit the ACSOC. Furthermore, there is no need to bring one factor, two factor or even three factor (which is what economics has emphasized for 200 years) theory into a discussion of a plan to broaden capital ownership.

It should also be noted that the so-called two factor theory is really the clearest example one could hope to see of a one factor theory: "an age when wealth is chiefly produced by things" (p. 21) or "affluence is not the product of the human factor but the non-human factor." (p. 22) Such statements have no basis in reality.

Other statements that are incorrect are: "still pretending to believe that labor's productivity is rising" (pp. 16-17) because everyone has acknowledged for years the decade long decline in labor productivity; "there could be no physical shortage of purchasing power..." (p. 23) because the concept of a physical shortage cannot relate to purchasing power; and "since the corporate sector produces 87% of non-agricultural, non-governmental goods and services, it also generates 87% of the economy's purchasing power" (p. 25) because purchasing power and production are not equivalent to each other, being two distinct phenomena. There is also a factual error on p. 10 for the maximum corporate income tax rate is now 46%.

Specific Comments and Recommendations

I have a number of concerns regarding dividends. First, it is unclear to me when they start being distributed. Also, does the 90% mandatory payout refer to net income after the loan payment has been made? Relatedly, I could find no provisions in the bill related to repayment of the loan, particularly regarding the time period. This should be clearly specified.

Regarding the distribution of dividends, I have noted that a one share per citizen distribution is appropriate in the beginning. However, if the goal is to provide capital ownership to those who otherwise would likely never own capital, the idea of distributing future shares according to income level should be explored. It is hard to justify giving free shares to that top 5% Kelso so often refers to who own most of the income-producing capital today. Perhaps a simple sliding scale would be most equitable: 3 shares to those making \$0 - 12000; 2 shares for \$12 - 25000, 1 share for \$25 - 40000 and no shares for \$40000 and above. The question of whether all citizens or just adults should be share recipients needs to be examined. Also, should long-standing Alaskan citizens receive favored treatment over newcomers? Such questions would become more significant as future investments are undertaken by AGSOC.

My other set of comments relate to project evaluation. Senator Cravel has suggested the type of evaluation he would like to see in the Congressional Record of October 24, 1978. I encourage the Alaskan State Legislature to incorporate these requirements into the legislation establishing the AGSOC: that the annual report of the GSOC filed with the Treasury Department include studies of the effect of the GSOC on distribution of income and wealth, the level of transfer payments made or required, the social and demographic profiles of GSOC shareholders, the level of economic understanding of GSOC shareholders, and possible beneficial revisions to the GSOC legislation. The legislature may also want to more closely examine the effect on state revenues and outlays as well as conduct a more in-depth survey of a sample of recipients which could be used as input to an annual "Report from the People" which could be distributed to all Alaskans.

Robert D. Hamrin

Biographical Sketch

Received his B.A. Magna Cum Laude from St. Olaf College in 1968 and his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin in 1972. Served as Assistant Professor at Hong Kong Baptist College (1972-73) and University of Idaho (1973-74). Came to the Joint Economic Committee as a staff economist where his two major areas from 1974-78 were broadening capital ownership and long-run U. S. economic growth prospects. His principal duties regarding the capital ownership area were to staff the J.E.C. hearings in December 1975 and author the staff study Broadening the Ownership of New Capital: EOPs and Other Alternatives. In 1978, he wrote a book under a Rockefeller Foundation grant titled Rethinking Economics: The Realities of the 1980s which will be published by Praeger in late 1979. He is currently serving as the Senior Policy Economist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

James Allen were able to create and fund the Economic and Development Corporation, a separate Swiss company, and pay \$750,000 to Dr. Hubert Weisbrod, a Swiss attorney, to stimulate West Coast man jet sales without the knowledge of the board or, apparently, other senior executives.

At 3M, chairman Bert Cross and finances vice president Irwin Hansen ordered the company insurance department to pay out \$509,000 for imaginary insurance and the bookkeeper to fraudulently record the payments as a "necessary and proper" business expense for tax purposes. Although the transactions lacked required documentation, they were approved by both departments and later "verified" by Haskins and Sells, the outside auditor.

Ashland Oil Corporation's chief executive officer, Orwin E. Atkins, involved at least eight executives in illegally generating and distributing \$801,165 in domestic political contributions, also without question. Not only was the board not informed until the Special Prosecutor's Office and Internal Revenue Service compelled Atkins to dribble out details of the misappropriation of funds, but Ernst and Ernst, Ashland's accountants, did not effectively investigate any of half a dozen separate accounts it discovered that suggested Ashland's illegal course of action.

The Legal Basis of Management Power

The legal basis for such a consolidation of power in the hands of the corporation's chief executive is the proxy election. Annually the shareholders of each publicly held corporation are given the opportunity of either attending a meeting to nominate and elect directors or returning proxy cards to management or its challengers signing over their right to vote. Few shareholders personally attend meetings. Sylvan Silver, a Reuters correspondent who covers over 100 Wilmington annual meetings each year, described representative 1974 meetings in an interview: At Cities Service Company, the 77th largest industrial corporation with some 135,000 shareholders, 25 shareholders actually attended the meeting; El Paso Natural Gas with 125,000 shareholders had 50 shareholders; at Coca Cola, the 69th largest corporation with 70,000 shareholders, 25 shareholders

SOURCE: TAMING THE GIANT CORPORATION

NADER, GREEN AND SELIGMAN

attended the annual meeting; at Bristol Meyers with 60,000 shareholders a like 25 shareholders appeared. Even "Campaign GM," the most publicized shareholder challenge of the past two decades, attracted no more than 3,000 of General Motors' 1,400,000 shareholders, or roughly two-tenths of one percent.

Thus, corporate directors are almost invariably chosen by written proxies. Yet management so totally dominates the proxy machinery that corporate elections have come to resemble the Soviet Union's euphemistic "Communist ballot"—that is, a ballot which lists only one slate of candidates. Although federal and state laws require the annual performance of an elaborate series of rituals pretending there is "corporate democracy," in 1973, 99.7 percent of the directorial elections in our largest corporations were uncontested.

Of the 6,744 corporations required to file data with the Securities and Exchange Commission, incumbent management retained control in at least 6,734 companies, or 99.9 percent. In the 500 largest industrial corporations—corporations which account for some 66 percent of the sales of all industrial corporations in the United States—no incumbent management was even challenged in 1973. One-sided as these results are, they are entirely typical for the largest business corporations. During the 18 years for which data are available, 1956-73, management has won 99.9 percent of all proxy solicitations in 10 out of 18 years.

THE BEST DEMOCRACY MONEY CAN BUY

The key to management's hegemony is money. Effectively, only incumbent management can nominate directors—because it has a nearly unlimited power to use corporate funds to win board elections while opponents must prepare separate proxies and campaign literature entirely at their own expense.

There is first management's power to print and post written communications to shareholders. In a typical proxy contest, management will "follow up" its initial proxy solicitation with a bombardment of five to ten subsequent mailings. As attorneys Edward Aranow and Herb Einhorn explain in their treatise, *Proxy Contests for Corporate Control*:

Perhaps the most important aspect of the follow-up letter is its role in the all-important efforts of a soliciting group to secure the *latest-dated* proxy from a stockholder. It is characteristic of every proxy contest that a large number of stockholders will sign and return proxies to one faction and then change their minds and want to have their stock used for the opposing faction.

The techniques of the Northern States Power Company in 1973 are illustrative. At that time, Northern States Power Company voluntarily employed cumulative voting, which meant that only 7.2 percent of outstanding shares was necessary to elect one director to Northern's 14-person board. Troubled by Northern's record on environmental and consumer issues, a broadly based coalition of public interest groups called the Citizens' Advocate for Public Utility Responsibility (CAPUR) nominated Ms. Alpha Snaby, a former Minnesota state legislator, to run for director. These groups then successfully solicited the votes of over 14 percent of all shareholders, or more than twice the votes necessary to elect her to the board.

Northern States then bought back the election. By soliciting proxies a second, and then a third time, the Power Company was able to persuade (or confuse) the shareholders of 71 percent of the 2.8 million shares cast for Ms. Snaby to change their votes.

Larger, more experienced corporations are usually less heavy-handed. Typically, they will begin a proxy campaign with a series of "build-up" letters preliminary to the first proxy solicitation. In Campaign GM, General Motors elevated this strategy to a new plateau by encasing the Project on Corporate Responsibility's single 100-word proxy solicitation within a 21-page booklet specifically rebutting each of the Project's charges. The Project, of course, could never afford to respond to GM's campaign. The postage costs of soliciting GM's 1,400,000 shareholders alone would have exceeded \$100,000. The cost of printing a document comparable to GM's 21-page booklet, mailing it out, accompanied by a proxy statement, a proxy card, and a stamped return envelope to each shareholder might have run as high as \$500,000.

Nor is it likely that the Project or any other outside shareholder could match GM's ability to hire "professional" proxy solicitors

such as Georgeson & Company, which can deploy up to 100 solicitors throughout the country to personally contact shareholders, give them a campaign speech, and urge them to return their proxies. By daily tabulation of returned proxies, professional solicitors are able to identify on a day-by-day basis the largest blocks of stock outstanding which have yet to return a favorable vote.

Management's "army" in a proxy contest will also include attorneys to prepare necessary documents for the SEC and distract the opposition with costly litigation; accountants and statisticians to prepare the most self-serving financial analysis allowable; and public relations advisors to prepare advertisements for trade journals and the financial section of major newspapers. In the past 25 years there have been no more than a dozen instances in which insurgents have been able to match management expenses in a major proxy fight. Over the past decade, only the MGM proxy contest of 1967 has seen insurgents match management expenses in a large corporation's proxy contest for control.

A second advantage—and one that no outsider can match—is management's ability to use corporate personnel on its own behalf. Clerical help and clerical facilities including printing presses, photocopying machines, and addressing machines are invariably employed. Salespersons skilled in talking to customers are frequently assigned to the telephones to answer inquiries and to supplement the professional proxy solicitors by making direct calls to shareholders. Moreover, senior executives can be assigned to telephone particularly important shareholders who may be impressed by the personal call of a top executive.

State corporations law has done nothing to correct this inequality of corporate resources. Although leading cases in Delaware and New York have engaged in much gnashing of teeth about limiting management expenditures to: (a) proxy contests involving a "policy" issue, (b) expenditures necessary to inform shareholders about the "policy" issue, and/or (c) "reasonable" expenses—no decision since 1907 in either jurisdiction has denied management the power to expend corporate funds or use corporate personnel exactly as management chooses. Even such seemingly "unreasonable"

expenditures as public relations counsel, "entertainments," chartered airlines, limousines, and the indirect cost to the corporation of using officers and employees on behalf of an incumbent director slate have survived judicial scrutiny. By contrast, state courts have firmly established the rule that insurgents, unlike management, are not entitled to reimbursement of any campaign expenses as a matter of right. Challengers must defray all their own expenses, with the single slim hope of later being reimbursed if they are successful and the stockholders approve.

MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION

Management's grip on corporate power is tightened by its authority to print and distribute annual, quarterly, and other reports to shareholders. Besides the formal proxy statement, these reports usually embody the only detailed information shareholders receive about their corporation.

Neither state nor federal law places any meaningful restrictions on the amount of money management may spend reporting to shareholders. SEC Proxy Rules *do* require certification of financial statements. The report, however, "may be in any form deemed suitable by the management" and is not subject to the same standards of truthfulness that the text of a proxy solicitation is subjected to. Consequently, though every word of an insurgent shareholder's communications with other shareholders may be challenged if it is arguably "false or misleading," most management reports are subject to no textual regulation whatever.

Unfortunately, management reports are frequently "false and misleading." They are often written in an upbeat public relations jargon which emphasizes "positive" aspects of the past business year while rationalizing or ignoring management mistakes, financial losses, corporate or executive criminal violations, or civil actions successfully prosecuted against the corporation. Frequently, as much as half of the text of an annual report is represented by oversized charts, colored illustrations, and kindred public relations gimmickry.

There is often little difference between the text of a failing corporation's annual report and a healthy corporation's report. For ex-

ample, although subsequent congressional testimony made clear that Lockheed would have gone bankrupt unless it received an emergency loan guarantee from the federal government, Lockheed's 1969 annual report managed to ignore the prominent debate in Congress over whether the federal government should "bail out" the firm. Instead shareholders read the following:

It is disappointing to have to record a net loss for the year. Yet setbacks like this are singularly possible in an industry so dependent upon government policy and the ebb and flow of domestic and international developments.

We have experienced them before and in each case have emerged stronger than ever. We are confident this will be so again. We say this not out of easy optimism but from the knowledge that we have many broadly based defense and commercial programs with high business potential and that we are expending much technical effort to meet the nation's future needs.

The report then spent six pages suggesting that Lockheed's financial difficulties were primarily the result of contractual misunderstandings with the federal government. It strongly suggested that the federal government would compromise in these disputes. It was only *after* the Senate voted an Emergency Loan Guarantee by the razor-thin margin of 49-48 in August 1971 that Lockheed reported to its shareholders that without this congressional subsidy the corporation would have collapsed.

A similar lack of veracity appeared in the 1973 Annual Report of the Franklin New York Corporation, whose principal subsidiary was the Franklin National Bank, the largest state bank ever to fail in the United States. Just a few months before the Comptroller declared the Franklin National Bank insolvent, the corporation's management reported to its shareholders that "In 1973 Franklin crossed an important threshold so that it is now in a position to move forward in establishing itself as a major worldwide financial institution and a leading money center banking operation." Nowhere in the report was any mention made of the foreign currency speculation or improvident real estate loans which four months later caused the bank's demise. This was a serious omission, for the intolerance of financial loss caused by Franklin's collapse was

absorbed by the shareholder-readers of this report, not the management or the public relations firm which wrote it. These shareholder-readers were given absolutely no warning of what was coming, no opportunity to exert their prerogative to change management or to vote a more timely dissolution.

Nor can insurgent shareholders obtain much additional information from their own corporation when they prepare for a proxy challenge. They lack the legal tools to gain access to live interviews with corporate executives, board meetings, or memoranda which could document internal debate, management error, derogations of law, sloppy execution of policy, or even the content of management's policy formulations.

All of which is a bizarre commentary on the Securities and Exchange Commission. The federal security laws emphasize disclosure. The Commission has claimed that its Proxy Rules "represent an effective contribution to corporate democracy" because disclosure enables individual investors to exercise some measure of control over the management of their corporation. Although the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 authorizes the SEC to require annual and quarterly reports, including the authority to prescribe "the items or details to be shown in the balance sheet and the earnings statement . . .," shareholders can not compel their corporation to give a product line or division accounting so as to uncover unprofitable operations. Specific management mistakes may thus be submerged in consolidated financial reports. Shareholders may wish to know whether executives are using expense accounts improperly or are being indemnified for certain civil or criminal liabilities. They cannot find out. They may wish to read minutes of the meetings of corporate directors—whom they elect—or reports of decisions by executives respecting corporate property—which shareholders own. Under federal securities laws, they have no legal rights to do so.

Under state statutory law, shareholders theoretically have broad rights to examine corporate records. State statutes typically authorize inspection of shareholder lists—without which a shareholder could not even begin a proxy solicitation—and "other books and records." But this access is circumscribed by legal require-

ments of "good faith," "proper purpose," and minimum share ownership, as well as ample opportunities for management to delay compliance with legitimate shareholder demands by forcing expensive court tests.

Almost invariably shareholders prevail in court battles to secure a shareholder list, for, as a leading Pennsylvania decision put it, ". . . the right to examine the stockholders' list is a basic privilege of every stockholder of a corporation and should be given the widest recognition as fundamental to corporate democracy." But the courts are reluctant to enforce shareholder demands for other information. Doctrinally, this has been rationalized as deterring excessive "stockholder agitation." The Supreme Court of Minnesota rather melodramatically¹ explained why in the leading case of *State Ex rel. Pillsbury v. Honeywell*:

In terms of the corporate norm, inspection is merely the act of the concerned owner checking on what is in part his property. In the context of the large firm, inspection can be more akin to a weapon in corporate warfare. The effectiveness of the weapon is considerable: "considering the huge size of many modern corporations and the necessarily complicated nature of their bookkeeping, it is plain that to permit thousands of shareholders to roam at will through their records will render impossible not only any attempt to keep their records efficiently, but the proper carrying on of their business." . . . Because the power to inspect may be the power to destroy, it is important that only those with a bona fide interest in the corporation enjoy the power. . . .

Alarming as the specter of "thousands of shareholders roaming at will" through once efficient corporations may be, it can only be conjured up by courts so cunning as to overlook their inherent judicial power to restrict any shareholder access to corporate data to reasonable numbers of shareholders at reasonable times and reasonable places. Yet phantom or not, this rationale has been employed in recent decisions to deny one A&P shareholder access to the minutes of board meetings and information relevant to store closings; to deny Ralston Purina shareholders access to monthly profit analyses employed by management; and to deny shareholders of Gulf Sulphur Corporation information concerning a firm with which Gulf proposed to merge.

MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF THE LAW

Management power is further entrenched by three significant legal advantages.

First, in approximately 90 percent of all large industrial corporations, cumulative voting is not required. In these corporations, a minority of shareholders—even a minority as substantial as 49.9 percent—may be precluded from electing even one director to the board.

Under cumulative voting, each shareholder is entitled to votes equal to the number of his or her shares multiplied by the number of directors to be elected. The shareholder may cast all his or her votes for a single candidate or distribute them among two or more candidates as he or she sees fit. Cumulative voting, therefore, helps to protect the *financial* interest of minority shareholders by assuring them voice on the board of directors. And it protects the *political* interest of minority shareholders. For without cumulative voting, the tendency of large industrial corporations to perpetuate one-party rule is powerfully enhanced. As Professor Charles M. Williams demonstrated after analyzing proxy contests for the years 1943–1948, corporations with cumulative voting were more than twice as likely to have proxy contests as those without.

Because of these benefits, cumulative voting has enjoyed considerable popularity. From 1870, when Illinois became the first state to require cumulative voting, until 1955, 23 states had established absolute requirements for cumulative voting. Additionally, federal law requires cumulative voting for over 5,000 banks subject to the Federal Banking Act of 1933 (although the intent of this law has often been frustrated by bank holding company structures); and the Securities and Exchange Commission has consistently required cumulative voting for corporations subject to the Public Utility Holding Act of 1935 and corporations undergoing reorganization under Chapter X of the Bankruptcy Act. As an attorney snapped in 1950 in frustration at Wisconsin's refusal to enact cumulative voting, "Cumulative voting is so obviously in accord with our basic political philosophy of group representation and the party system that it is difficult to understand th

ture's repeated rejection of it, except in terms of a response to the pressure of corporate management's interest."

Unfortunately, "the pressure of corporate management's interest" often does prevail in state corporation law. Between 1955 and 1972, five states dropped mandatory cumulative voting. In 1973, Michigan changed from mandatory to permissive cumulative voting; in 1974 both California and Ohio considered—but did not enact—similar legislation. Today, in Delaware, as well as 32 other states, cumulative voting is not required. True, in most of these states, cumulative voting is permitted. In practice, however, permissive cumulative voting offer little but an illusory right. Studies by Professor Williams in 1951 and the Conference Board in 1973 indicate that only about 15 percent of the corporations in states with permissive cumulative voting have provided for this right.

And even in those few corporations which voluntarily institute cumulative voting, most states provide ample devices to subvert it. Although cumulative voting aims to prevent a simple majority from maintaining absolute corporate control, Delaware permits a simple majority to amend the corporate charter to repeal cumulative voting. And Delaware and some 42 other jurisdictions allow the "classification" of the board of directors. This device reduces to one third or one half the number of directors required to stand for election annually and thus increases the minimum vote necessary to elect a director.

Management's second legal edge is its power to issue nonvoting stock or classes of stock with unequal voting rights. For example, prior to December 1, 1955, there were three classes of stock in Ford Motor Company: common, Class A, and Class B. Only the Class B shares (4.94 percent of total equity), all of which were owned by Ford family interests, were entitled to vote.

Only Illinois and a few other states forbid the issuance of classes or series of stock without voting rights. But the refusal of both the New York Stock Exchange and the American Stock Exchange to list corporations with nonvoting stock has substantially reduced the number of corporations which may totally eviscerate shareholder suffrage, although neither exchange actively enforces equal voting rights.

The third statutory device for impairing shareholder suffrage

rights is a provision common to the law of Delaware and apparently every other jurisdiction requiring the submission of proxy materials only to *shareholders of record*. This innocent sounding requirement effectively disenfranchises approximately 50 percent of the beneficial owners of corporate stock in the largest industrial corporations. For approximately 50 percent of the stock in the 1,800 companies traded on the New York Stock Exchange is held by mutual funds, life insurance or property and casualty insurance companies, private pension funds (usually administered through commercial bank trust departments), state and local pension funds, foundations, university endowment funds or other institutional investors. The result is a mockery of shareholder democracy: *Approximately 50 percent of the votes in our largest industrial corporations are cast by financial intermediaries—not the real owners.*

These institutional shareholders provide virtually no check to corporate management. Most financial institutions, according to the SEC's 1971 *Institutional Investor Study*, follow what is known as "The Wall Street Rule": An investment in a business corporation is considered an investment in that corporation's management; if the financial institution ceases to like what management is doing, the institution sells the stock. By examining the voting practices of 215 large institutions between January 1, 1967 and September 30, 1969, the SEC determined that approximately 30 percent of these institutions *always* voted for management (in elections other than votes for directors). For the remaining institutions, both voting against management and abstention were found "to be a relatively infrequent phenomena." For example, in only 26 instances did any of the 215 institutions vote against an acquisition favored by management, "a miniscule fraction of such transactions."

The SEC conducted its study before the proliferation of shareholder proposals directed at social issues and precipitated by Campaign GM. In the past five years, some financial institutions have established formal procedures to consider shareholder public policy or ethical proposals. According to newsletters published by the Council on Economic Priorities and the Investor Responsibility Research Center, a small number of church-related funds, foundations, and universities have supported shareholder proposals respecting disclosure of political contributions; withdrawal from

South Africa, Rhodesia, or Namibia; opposition to military production; or review of corporate safety, environment, occupational discrimination, or community programs. Since most institutional shares are voted by banks, insurance companies, and mutual funds, and these financial institutions have shown only a negligibly greater willingness to oppose management, the overall pattern of institutional voting has changed little in the past five years.

MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF OTHER FUNDAMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

Historically, shareholders controlled the business corporation not only through the election of directors but also through shareholders' power to initiate and vote upon all fundamental changes in the character of the corporation. Management's ability to initiate change was carefully circumscribed by requiring two-thirds or three-fourths affirmative votes for charter amendments, bylaw changes, mergers, sales of assets, stock issuance, recapitalization, or dissolution and was further limited by shareholder appraisal and preemptive rights.

Under Delaware's General Corporation Law, shareholders have lost nearly all power to initiate corporate change. Only the board of directors may propose charter amendments, a merger, or a sale of assets. The SEC Proxy Rules complement Delaware's corporation law by denying shareholders opportunity to communicate opposition to management proposals or to suggest modifications in management's formal proxy proposals.

This rout has been substantially replicated in all other leading chartering states. Indeed, the trend of recent revisions to state corporation law has been to attempt to deny the shareholder any vote at all! Modern corporate draftsmen invariably write short, purely formal certificates of incorporation and then place most of a corporation's actual governing rules in its bylaws, which the certificate establishes can be revised by the corporation's directors without any shareholder vote. For example, when ITT reincorporated in Delaware in 1967, it did so by creating a Delaware corporation called the "DeLitt Corporation" and by then merging ITT, previously a Maryland corporation, into DeLitt. The certificate of incorporation of DeLitt was only 1½ pages long. It reads in toto:

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
OF
DELITT CORPORATION

Article 1

The name of the corporation is Delitt Corporation (hereinafter called the "Corporation"). The name and mailing address of its incorporators are as follows:

NAME	MAILING ADDRESS
John J. Navin	320 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
William J. Donovan	320 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022
DeForest Billyou	320 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

Article 2

The address of the registered office of the Corporation in the State of Delaware is No. 100 West Tenth Street, in the City of Wilmington, County of New Castle. The name of its registered agent at such address is The Corporation Trust Company.

Article 3

The purpose of the Corporation is to engage in any lawful act or activity for which corporations may be organized under the General Corporation Law of Delaware.

Article 4

The total number of shares of stock which the Corporation has authority to issue is 100 shares of capital stock of the par value of \$100 per share.

Article 5

Whenever the vote of stockholders at a meeting thereof is required or permitted to be taken for or in connection with any corporate action by any provision of the General Corporation Law of Delaware, the meeting and vote of stockholders may be dispensed with if the holders of stock having not less than the minimum percentage of the vote required by statute for the proposed corporate action shall consent in writing to such corporate action being taken, provided that prompt notice must be given to all stockholders of the taking of such corporate action without a meeting and by less than unanimous written consent.

Article 6

In furtherance and not in limitation of the powers conferred by law, the Board of Directors is expressly authorized:

(a) To make, alter, amend or repeal the By-Laws of the Corporation.

(b) To direct and determine the use and disposition of any annual net profits or net assets in excess of capital; to set apart out of any of the funds of the Corporation available for dividends a reserve or reserves for any proper purpose; and to abolish any such reserve in the manner in which it was created.

(c) To establish bonus, profit-sharing, stock option, retirement or other types of incentive or compensation plans for the employees (including officers and directors) of the Corporation and to fix the amount of the profits to be distributed or shared and to determine the persons to participate in any such plans and the amounts of their respective participations.

(d) From time to time to determine whether and to what extent, and at what time and places and under what conditions and regulations, the accounts and books of the Corporation (other than the stock ledger), or any of them, shall be open to the inspection of the stockholders; and no stockholder shall have any right to inspect any account or book or document of the Corporation, except as conferred by statute or authorized by the Board of Directors or by a resolution of the stockholders.

(e) To authorize, and cause to be executed, mortgages and liens upon the real and personal property of the Corporation.

Article 7

The corporation reserves the right to amend, alter, change or repeal any provision contained in this Certificate of Incorporation, in the manner now or hereafter prescribed by statute, and all rights conferred upon stockholders herein are granted subject to this reservation.

The key sentence is contained in Article 6: "In furtherance and not in limitation of the powers conferred by law, the Board of Directors is expressly authorized: (a) To make, alter, amend or repeal the By-Laws of the corporation. . . ." What ITT tried to do, as so many other giant Delaware corporations have tried to do, was to totally shut shareholders out of the governing process except in those rare instances in which the Delaware General Corporation Law explicitly requires a shareholder vote—which is not very often.

True, technically, section 251(c) grants shareholders a vote on management merger proposals. But this, in fact, is a mere snare

for the dim-witted. Only a small minority of corporate business actually trigger this shareholder vote. The overwhelming majority employ one of three conventional loopholes (discussed in the Sources).

Similarly, section 271 limits shareholder suffrage in a sale, lease, or exchange of assets to transactions involving "all or substantially all" of a corporation's property and assets. Since most large industrial corporations are highly diversified, this provision effectively insures their shareholders will never vote. For example, General Motors could sell an automobile division such as Pontiac or Cadillac and not require a vote. It could liquidate hundred-million-dollar plants which manufacture refrigerators, diesel engines, and trucks or auction off all of its Detroit real estate and relocate in the Peoples Republic of China, and shareholders would have no choice in the matter. Only if GM sold *all* assets used to manufacture "automotive products" (about 75 percent of the corporation) would a sale of assets require a shareholder vote.

Moreover, section 271 is the only Delaware statute concerning corporate divisions. A Delaware corporation may create and fund new subsidiary corporations, regardless of size; liquidate these subsidiaries or comparable divisions and distribute assets to shareholders; or spin-off new corporations altogether without any shareholder vote. As business corporations have evolved these new forms, Delaware and other principal chartering states have deliberately not kept pace. Corporate executives have not hesitated to take advantage of this laxity. In the past three years many Delaware corporations have "gone private" and bought up minority shareholdings at bargain prices during a depressed stock market. This will allow favored shareholders or the firm itself to reap the profits when the company's stock price rises. Other senior managements have used the merger provisions to prevent take-over bids—which can benefit all shareholders—by requiring super-majorities, such as 75 or 90 percent, to consent to any consolidation or sale of the companies' assets.

Whither/Wither the Board of Directors?

But does not the board of directors with its sweeping statutory mandate "to manage the business and affairs of every corporation"

provide an internal check on the power of corporate executives? So long ago the grandiloquent words of the statutes ceased to have any operative meaning. "Directors," William O. Douglas complained in 1934, "do not direct." "[T]here is one thing all boards have in common, regardless of their legal position," Peter Drucker has written. "*They do not function.*" In Robert Townsend's tart analysis, "[M]ost big companies have turned their boards of directors into nonboards. . . . In the years that I've spent on various boards I've never heard a single suggestion from a director (made as a director *at* a board meeting) that produced any result at all."

Recently these views were corroborated by Professor Myles Mace of the Harvard Business School, the nation's leading authority on the performance of boards of directors. In *Directors—Myth and Reality*, Mace summarized the results of hundreds of interviews with corporate officers and directors.

Directors do not establish the basic objectives, corporate strategies or broad policies of large and medium-sized corporations, Mace found. Management creates the policies. The board has a right of veto but rarely exercises it. As one executive said, "Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, the board goes along with management. . . ." Or another, "I can't think of a single time when the board has failed to support a proposed policy of management or failed to endorse the recommendation of management."

The board does not select the president or other chief executive officers. "What is perhaps the most common definition of a function of the board of directors—namely, to select the president—was found to be the greatest myth," reported Mace. "The board of directors in most companies, except in a crisis, does not select the president. The president usually chooses the man who succeeds him to that position, and the board complies with the legal amenities in endorsing and voting his election." A corporate president agreed: "The former company president tapped me to be president, and I assure you that I will select my successor when the time comes." Even seeming exceptions such as RCA's 1975 ouster of Robert Sarnoff frequently turn out to be at the instigation of senior operating executives rather than an aroused board.

The board's role as disciplinarian of the corporation is more apparent than real. As the business-supported Conference Board conceded, "One of the most glaring deficiencies attributed to the corporate board . . . is its failure to monitor and evaluate the performance of the chief executive in a concrete way." To cite a specific example, decisions on executive compensation are made by the president—with perfunctory board approval in most situations. In the vast majority of corporations, Professor Mace found, the compensation committee, and the board which approves the recommendations of the compensation committee, "are not decision-making bodies."

Directors do not even ask discerning questions. It is considered "discourteous," a breach of "corporate manners" for directors to "challenge" the president or other corporate officers. This can be a very expensive form of decorum, as the Penn Central's shareholders painfully discovered. At the time of its collapse in June 1970, Penn Central was the largest railroad in the country and the sixth largest industrial corporation overall. Within a two-year period, shareholders witnessed the decline of their shares from \$86.50 to \$2.75.

Why? "The board was definitely responsible for the trouble," recounted outside director E. Clayton Gengras. "They took their fees and they didn't do anything. Over a period of years, people just sat there. That poor man from the University of Pennsylvania [University President Gaylord P. Harnwell], he never opened his mouth. They didn't know the factual picture and they didn't try to find out." As the Penn Central rushed towards its monumental crack-up, the board routinely approved every proposal forwarded by management. Although Penn Central was desperate for capital, the directors paid out nearly \$100 million in dividends. The board never saw a capital expenditures budget. It never understood the inaccuracies published in Penn Central's annual reports. Just six hours before the corporation filed its bankruptcy petition, the board routinely approved new contracts for eight corporate executives, apparently unaware even then of the dimensions of the Penn Central's crisis. "All of this raises the serious question as to whether giant corporations affecting the everyday lives of our population . . . should continue to be governed in the traditional fash-

ion or whether a new system of corporate directorships should be devised," concluded the House Banking and Currency Committee.

Yet boards will continue to be dysfunctional as long as they remain the creature of the corporate chief executive. For it is the chief executive who, like the family owner-manager in a small corporation, selects new members of the board. And it is the chief executive who de-selects existing board members when nominations for the board are necessary for annual shareholders' meetings.

Our own survey of the boards of the 200 largest industrial corporations found that the average board had a total of 14.49 directors, including 7.93 "outsiders" (that is, directors who were not employees of the corporation) and 6.56 insiders (or employee directors). Some 69 percent of the outside directors were fellow corporate executives; 6 percent were investment bankers; 7 percent were lawyers. Only 2 percent were women; a lesser percentage were black. Hence over 90 percent of the directors of our largest corporations either worked for the corporate chief executive or were fellow corporate executives, corporate bankers, or corporate lawyers.

Most "outside" directors appear to be chosen because of their status. "Presidents and chairmen of large and respected companies," one corporate president observed, "enjoy the prestige of serving on similar large and respected company boards. They are identified with their peers. They find the experience socially satisfying. Outside directorships provide a few more lines in their *Who's Who*, and it is a little bit like being knighted to say 'I'm a director of General Motors, or General Electric, or AT&T.'" Frequently, the chief executive chooses his friends, or individuals known to be "sympathetic" or "congenial," to be directors. "You certainly don't want anyone on your board who even slightly might be a challenge on a question of your tenure, so you pick personal friends with prestige titles and names," a corporate president explained. Another executive agreed: "What would you do if you were president? You control the company and you control the board. You want to perpetuate this control. . . . You sure as hell are not going to ask Ralph Nader. . . ."

At its worst, the outside director system degenerates into a private club, as the president of a west coast company explained:

You've got to remember that the outside directors of large national and regional companies are members of a sort of club. To be considered for admission you must have the title as president or chairman of a respectable and respected organization. This is what some young people call the establishment. But these are the people you do business with, travel around with, serve on community projects with—and it has to be a group the members of which get along together. Regionally each area has its elite. Sometimes many will in fact be members of the same golf or social club. Here in Los Angeles you will find a great number of directors with membership in the Los Angeles Country Club; in Cleveland the same is true of the Union Club—each city has its hard core members of the club group.

Exceptions to this pattern become news events. In reporting on General Motor's 1971 annual shareholders' meeting, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that, "The meeting's dramatic highlight was an impassioned and unprecedented speech by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, GM's recently appointed Negro director, supporting the Episcopal Church's efforts to get the company out of South Africa. It was the first time that a GM director had ever spoken against management at an annual meeting." Now Rev. Sullivan is an unusual outside director, being General Motors' first black director and only "public interest" director. But what makes Leon Sullivan most extraordinary is that he was the first director in any major American corporation to come out publicly against his own corporation when its operations tended to support apartheid.

Yet as lethargic as outside directors usually are, employee directors tend to be even less effective. The typical vice president/inside-director is in a very precarious position at a board meeting. Unwilling to say anything in disagreement with his boss, he usually sits quietly and waits until he is called upon to speak. Disagreements with other corporate executives are invariably resolved out of the board room. The effect is to present outsiders with a "united front": to make the corporate chief executive's decisions seem inevitable.

So staffed, board meetings in most large industrial corporations have become formalized into a monthly or bimonthly ritual, usually lasting about one to three hours. Much of this time is consumed by perhaps a 30-minute to an hour review of operations for the last period (month or quarter) by the president or vice president

of finance. This is followed by board approvals of capital appropriations and of the actions of the executive committee taken since the last meeting. The meeting often concludes after senior executives have described a new research development or a major operations program. Usually the entire meeting—which is closed to shareholders—is choreographed by the corporate chief executive. He chooses which officers shall speak. He writes the agenda. When he wants to be asked about a particular issue, he plants the relevant question.

The impossibility of so infrequent or so circumscribed meetings of the board enabling directors to effectively "manage" their corporation was sardonically illustrated by the congressional testimony of H. O. Havemeyer, a corporate chieftain of an earlier day:

Q. As a member of that board, what else have you done?

A. Oh, I have convened and talked.

Q. You have convened and talked?

A. And adjourned.

Q. Well, you have convened and talked?

A. And adjourned.

Q. Well, what have you talked about?

A. Statistics.

This testimony was given in 1887 when outside directors were typically the "tools" or "dummies" of the controlling corporate president or bank. A popular gag on Wall Street was that the role of an outside director was to receive his five-dollar gold piece at the start of each meeting and then obediently fall asleep. Directorial lassitude is not so obvious today. Yet considering that the size and complexity of corporate enterprise has significantly increased since 1887 while the frequency and length of directors' meetings has not, it is a fair assumption that the outsiders who obediently nod through ceremonial board meetings today are little better informed than their brethren who slept before them.

Certainly directors' sources of information remain as much subject to management control today as they did 90 years ago. After resigning from TWA's board, former United States Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg had this complaint: "What the typical board of directors gets is a recommendation which seems mono-

lithic. . . . It's not like a court, where a judge can order a brief from both sides." Recently the *quantity* of preparatory information available to outside directors has significantly increased. Yet the thickened reports and whirlwind plant tours are still only what the corporate chief executive wants outsiders to see. "In many corporations," found Professor Melvin Eisenberg, "the executives go so far as to wholly deny the board—supposedly entrusted with supreme power over the corporation—access to certain categories of information." For instance, a 1971 survey found that only 17 percent of 474 industrial firms sent manufacturing data to directors prior to board meetings, only 21 percent sent marketing data, and 11 percent sent no data at all.

And outside directors have little personal incentive to doubt management. A 1973 survey of 378 manufacturing corporations with assets of \$50 million or more showed that outside directors received median annual fees of approximately \$5,900, while inside directors generally are not paid at all. On top of the \$100,000+ incomes typically earned by outside directors, who are corporate chief executives or vice presidents, leading investment bankers, or law firm partners, such annual retainers or meeting fees seem like peanuts. The result is counterproductive. Outside directors rationalize not doing very much by the fact they are not paid very much.

How, then, can one reconcile the grand imperative, "The business and affairs of every corporation . . . shall be managed by or under the direction of . . . a board of directors" with the reality of this "non decision-making body"? The fashionable response is that the board is a legal fiction. Management control has overwhelmed the rule of law.

This widely held view is only half right. Management has deposed the board of directors—but it has done so under color of law. No rule within the modern corporation statutes prohibits management from nominating and serving as directors. Corporation law has abrogated directional independence by omission. Moreover, even if the statutes provided structural safeguards to maintain the independence of the board, these could not undo the effect of two provisions found in most state corporation laws.

The first provision is exemplified by a Delaware Corporation Law section which provides that a director shall "be fully protected in relying in good faith upon . . . reports made to the corporation by any of its officers." The meaning of this provision is very simple. Directors have no duty to know. "Unless something occurs to put them on suspicion that something is wrong, directors are entitled to rely on the honesty and integrity of [management]," held the leading case of *Graham v. Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company*. Directors are not required to "put into effect a system of watchfulness." They need not anticipate problems nor verify the accuracy of reports upon which they rely.

A second provision of the Delaware General Corporation Law accomplishes the same result by allowing the board to formally delegate responsibility for most corporate business to a committee dominated by inside directors. Our survey of the 200 largest industrial corporations indicates that approximately two-thirds of the corporations had withdrawn directorial powers from the full board—typically a majority of whose members were outsiders—to an executive committee at least half of whose members were insiders.

A much smaller number of corporations accomplish a comparable result by delegating authority to an insider-dominated finance committee. In our survey of the 200 largest industrial corporations, we found that 16 corporations had delegated authority to a finance committee, half or more of whose members were insiders.

Examples of the delegation of the board's authority to either an insider-dominated executive or finance committee have been well described by attorney John A. McMullen:

At IBM—four directors, all top level officers of the corporation, control the all-important executive and finance committees; in addition, three of them are members of the powerful Corporate Office. At GM, four or five men, all inside directors of the company, dominate the executive and finance committees of the board as well as the administration committee comprised of key officers and directors. . . . DuPont's executive committee consists of the company's chairman of the board, president, and six senior vice presidents. Each of these men is entirely relieved of day-to-day functional responsibilities; each operates jointly with his fellow committee

members to set overall corporate policy, and acts only as an advisor to the operating department from which he originally derived his skills, training, and experience.

Yet, whether or not the board formally resolves to delegate operational authority to an executive committee between board meetings, the actuality is that employee directors or other senior executives invariably exercise the powers of initiation. It does not matter whether key corporate decisions are initiated by a single corporate autocrat or a board committee or a committee operating out of the office of the president. Senior executives call the shots. This is what Berle and Means meant by their insightful descriptions of "management control." This is why state corporation law is moribund. Not only is it written by corporate management's representatives, it is also hopelessly inaccurate. In appreciating the law of corporate governance, one rule above all others must be followed: *Concentrate on the omissions.* Where state law does not require directors to be, corporate executives inevitably are.

The Limitations of Shareholder Litigation

STATE LAW: THE NON-DUTY OF CARE

The erosion of shareholder authority within the corporation would be less serious if shareholders were able to oppose the abuses of corporate management in court. In theory, civil litigation remains the shareholder's ultimate check. The problem is that, except for certain limited claims under the federal securities laws, it rarely works. Long ago judicial doctrines reduced the state shareholder action to a trivial value.

Earliest was the judicial rejection of the principle of *ultra vires* action. In its classical form, the doctrine of *ultra vires* envisioned the corporate charter as a contract between the state, corporate management, and the shareholders. Corporations were prohibited from performing certain acts, not because they were illegal but because neither the state nor the shareholders had agreed to them. Shareholders could enjoin corporate officers and directors from engaging in actions "beyond their powers." Accordingly, in a leading 1867 case, a single shareholder blocked a railroad from extending

its railway to a more distant point than that specified in the charter because that was not the enterprise he had bargained for.

With the rise of the corporate enabling acts, the principle of *ultra vires* declined. Shareholder limitations were overridden through court discoveries of "implied" or "auxiliary" powers. In the 1896 case of *Jacksonville M. P. Ry. & Nav. Co. v. Hopper*, for example, the United States Supreme Court held that the Florida railway company might engage in leasing and running a resort hotel, on the curious logic that "to maintain cheap hotels or eating houses . . . would not be so plainly an act outside the powers of a railway company as to compel a court to sustain the defense of *ultra vires*. . . ." By 1931, *Fletcher's Cyclopedia of Corporations* could proclaim, "the theory that a corporation can do no acts beyond its authority [has been] discarded by a majority of the courts in the country."

Paralleling the decline of *ultra vires* has been the universal refusal of state courts to hold corporate directors or officers liable for negligence. Because they are vested with great power over other people's property, the law has always nominally required, in the language of the present New York statute, that "Directors and officers shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith and with that degree of diligence, care, and skill which ordinarily prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions."

In practice, the typical judicial or statutory formulation of the duty of care is too vague to require much of anything. As Yale Law School's Professor Joseph Bishop concluded after an extensive review of the case law:

The search for cases in which directors of industrial corporations have been held liable . . . for negligence uncomplicated by self-dealing is a search for a very small number of needles in a very large haystack. Few are the cases in which the stockholders do not allege conflict of interest, still fewer those among them which achieve even such partial success as denial of the defendant's motion to dismiss the complaint.

In all, Professor Bishop was able to find only four recent cases in which a state court held that a shareholder had alleged a good cause of action for negligence uncomplicated by self-dealing. In only one

of these cases did a state court rule on the merits that a corporate officer was liable for negligence. And in that case, the word "negligence" had been used as a euphemism for dishonesty.

This result is primarily the fault of statutory draftsmen. They have refused to identify *how* a corporate officer meets his duty of care. They have never identified what specific actions he must perform; what specific responsibilities are his. In the absence of a clear standard from the legislature, state courts have refused to guess.

At most, state courts will hold corporate directors or executives liable for conduct involving obvious self-enrichment such as fraud, misapplication of funds, diversion of corporate business opportunities, or causing the corporation to make excessive payment for the purchase of their property. Yet even in these types of cases, where the actions of corporate officers amount to simple and obvious theft, the procedural rules of state corporation law have been skewed to discourage shareholder suits.

The most onerous bars to shareholder litigation are the so-called "security for expenses" provisions enacted by New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan, California, and 13 other states. These provisions require a complaining shareholder owning less than a stated amount of stock—typically 5 percent of the stock or shares worth less than \$50,000—to "give security for the reasonable expenses, including attorney's fees, which may be incurred" by both the corporation and the parties defendant in a shareholder action. Since the cost of defendants' legal fees may amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, the security for expense provision, when enforced, presents a formidable barrier to shareholder action.

The rules respecting attorneys' fees pose a second procedural pitfall for shareholder actions. Nearly every jurisdiction provides that only shareholders whose suits are successful may be reimbursed by the corporation for attorneys' fees. This rule seeks to discourage attorneys from bringing nonmeritorious suits. Several states, however, further provide that attorneys' fees may be awarded only if a substantial monetary benefit is conferred upon the corporation. As a practical matter, this standard precludes shareholder litigation in all cases except those of overreaching where a monetary benefit—the amount taken—is readily apparent.

In all other cases it is normally cheaper to sell the stock than to compel the corporation to obey the law.

FEDERAL SECURITIES LAW: "TAKING OVER THE UNIVERSE GRADUALLY"?

To some extent, federal securities law—and federal court decisions—have compensated for the atrophy of state shareholder protection.

In 1968, the influential Second Circuit Court of Appeals handed down its celebrated *S.E.C. v. Texas Gulf Sulphur* decision which revolutionized the case law interpreting Rule 10b-5 under the 1934 Securities and Exchange Act. Rule 10b-5 provides that it is unlawful for any person to employ a fraudulent scheme, to make any untrue statement, or to fail to state a pertinent fact when purchasing or selling a security. *Texas Gulf* substantially broadened this antifraud rule by holding that corporate directors, officers, and employees violated 10b-5 when they purchased company stock knowing of a huge mineral strike before this fact was generally known or communicated to the public.

A federal district court, also in 1968, ruled in *Frost v. Bar Chris*—a decision some commentators initially believed¹ would have even greater effect on directorial behavior than *Texas Gulf*. In *Bar Chris* security holders asserted that a bowling alley construction company that had sold them convertible debentures had filed a registration statement prior to the sale of the bonds which contained false statements and omissions. After concluding that the registration statement did, indeed, contain numerous inaccuracies, the district court stunned Wall Street by holding all nine directors who signed the prospectus—including two new to the board—liable. In summing up their liability, the court seemed to move far toward creating a federal duty of care, at least with respect to registration statements:

Section 11 imposes liability in the first instance upon a director, no matter how new he is. He is presumed to know his responsibility when he becomes a director. He can escape liability only by using that reasonable care to investigate the facts which a prudent man would employ in the management of his own property. In my opinion, a prudent man would not act in an important matter without any knowledge of the relevant facts, in sole

reliance upon representations of persons who are comparative strangers and upon general information which does not purport to cover the particular case. To say that such minimal conduct measures up to the statutory standard would, to all intents and purposes, absolve new directors from responsibility merely because they are new. This is not a sensible construction of section 11, when one bears in mind its fundamental purpose of requiring full and truthful disclosure for the protection of investors.

The cumulative result of these and other federal securities law decisions led the *Wall Street Journal* to exclaim in early 1973, "[D]irectors of corporations now face more perils than Pauline ever did!" In a similar vein, Harvard Law School's securities expert, Professor Louis Loss, observed in 1969 that "the great Rule 10b-5," which had emerged as the principal basis of liability under the federal securities laws, "seems to be taking over the universe gradually."

In retrospect, both views seem overstated. The basic reason the securities laws will neither "take over the universe" nor seriously "imperil outside directors" is that they are restricted to a discrete set of securities transactions. Although present securities laws do require corporate officers to file with the SEC accurate periodic financial reports and securities registration statements, not make false and misleading statements in proxies, nor defraud outsiders in connection with their own securities purchases or sales, the securities laws do not, emphasized the Supreme Court in 1971, reach transactions which otherwise involve "internal corporate mismanagement."

And in late 1973, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals held in *Lanza v. Drexel* that only corporate officers who recklessly or deliberately defrauded shareholders could be held liable for money damages under Rule 10b-5. In refusing to follow the reasoning of the district court in the *Exott v. Bar Cbris* case, the appeals court made plain that an outside director who was "merely negligent" in his participation in a fraudulent securities transaction had little to fear.

The consequence of *Lanza* and similar recent decisions has been to leave federal securities law in a crazy quilt pattern. The federal securities laws, for example, will not reach a deliberate though not self-enriching decision of corporate executives to engage in an unprofitable line of business unless there has been an accom-

panying failure of disclosure. Nor will they reach decisions which do enrich corporate officers unless they involve security transactions. Liability seems so haphazard and fortuitous that former SEC Chairman William Cary was moved to complain:

There is no justification for a federal law disciplining or holding a tippee liable for misusing inside information concerning management decisions but not monitoring the misconduct of management itself. . . . It is absurd that a corporate transaction, clearly unfair though perhaps not fraudulent, should be subject to attack in the federal courts only upon the ground that it has not been disclosed to shareholders rather than because of its inherent inequity.

NULLIFY THE JUDGMENT: INDEMNIFICATION INSURANCE

Not only is it difficult for shareholders to successfully sue their companies, but even successful judgments often can be nullified. Seventeen states today permit corporations to purchase indemnification insurance for their directors and officers against, in the words of a typical policy, any "wrongful act [committed] . . . in their capacities as directors or officers." A 1974 survey of the Fortune 500 list found that 80 percent of these companies carried indemnification insurance. A similar sample of corporations listed on the New York Stock Exchange found that 76.1 percent carried such insurance. Since indemnification insurance was virtually unknown as recently as a dozen years ago, and most insurance policies were purchased within the past five to seven years, it is a fair assumption that nearly every large industrial corporation permitted by state law will carry indemnification insurance within a short time.*

* One reason for the enormous leap in the number of corporations carrying indemnification insurance has been the scare tactics employed by the insurance companies. The general tenor of their approach is illustrated by an advertisement on page six of the *Wall Street Journal*, March 21, 1968, featuring a composite photograph of a board of directors provided over by a stuffed duck and the explanatory text, "As a corporate officer or director, you may be a sitting duck for a shareholder or third party liability suit." A similar ad appears on page nine of the same issue wherein a sullen looking stockholder announces that he "might just sue every company director reading this newspaper," and reminds the presumably panicking directors that he is just one of "24 million potential enemies."

There is, to be sure, a persuasive case for indemnifying corporate directors against the costs of nonmeritorious legal claims. If innocent directors had to settle such suits because they lacked the resources to hire competent attorneys, responsible men and women would be discouraged from becoming directors. But current indemnity statutes are not limited to the purpose of protecting innocent officers from the costs of nonmeritorious suits. They also protect guilty officers from accountability for their wrongs and reduce incentives for lawful conduct.

Delaware's statute exemplifies this overbreadth. It allows a corporation

to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation . . . against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify him against any such liability under the provisions of this section.

As written, this provision permits the corporation to insulate its officers from *all* potential liabilities. Officers may be insured against any negligence, self-dealing, looting the corporation or embezzlement, all conflicts of interest, and deliberate statutory violations. They may be reimbursed for violations of federal safety, civil rights, environmental, tax, or antitrust laws. They may even be insured against the same judgments in derivative actions that an earlier provision of the same statute provided a corporation could not indemnify directly.

Delaware defends such insurance as a form of compensation, arguing that the corporation could make a larger compensation arrangement with the executive and let him pay for the insurance himself. But the question is not how much officers' compensation should be, but rather whether wrongful acts *should* be indemnified at all. Why should an executive of a drug company be indemnified for the costs of a criminal fine if he is convicted of allowing a harmful drug to injure several thousand people when the same act as a private individual would send him to jail? An untenable double standard has been created. The more powerful an executive becomes, the less likely he is to pay for an abuse of power.

Conflicts of Interests

In almost every primary economic relation of the industrial corporation—to competing corporations, to banks, to suppliers, to distributors, to investors—the law now permits (in many instances, encourages) the most blatant division of loyalties.

Most threatening is the anticompetitive practice of *interlocking directorates*. A philosophic cornerstone of American business is that vigorous competition will enable firms to have comparable access to capital, supplies, distributors, and markets, and thus an equal chance to succeed or fail on the merits. But if competing corporations place directors on each other's boards, there is opportunity to conspire on price or territory. If corporate officers sit on the boards of their banks or suppliers or distributors, there arises the obvious temptation to obtain preferential treatment based on favor and friendship. Then the race is not to the swift, but to the well-connected. Louis Brandeis saw the problem early in this century:

The practice of interlocking directorates is the root of many evils. It offends laws human and divine. Applied to rival corporations, it tends to the suppression of competition and to violation of the Sherman law. Applied to corporations which deal with each other, it tends to disloyalty and to violation of the fundamental law that no man can serve two masters. In either event it leads to inefficiency; for it removes incentive and destroys soundness of judgment. It is undemocratic, for it rejects the platform: "A fair field and no favors"—substituting the pull of privilege for the push of manhood.

With Brandeis as a major proponent, Congress in 1914 enacted the Clayton Act, section 8 of which expressly forbids any person from serving on the boards of two or more competing corporations. Until recently, however, section 8 had not been enforced. Through 1952, some 38 years after the enactment of the Clayton Act, the Department of Justice had not litigated a single case to a decision by a court. Through December 1975, the Department had instituted a total of 15 cases. The Federal Trade Commission, which has concurrent enforcement responsibilities, had filed only 13 complaints under section 8 of the Clayton Act through January 1965. Only one of these complaints resulted in a cease and desist order; the remainder were dismissed when the directors involved discon-

tinued the prohibited relationship. As Chairman Emanuel Celler's House Antitrust Subcommittee concluded in 1965 after a lengthy study of interlocks among competitors: enforcement had been neither "prompt nor vigorous."^{*}

Shortly after Celler's study was released, economist Peter Dooley calculated that there were a total of 4,007 directorships held by the directors of the 200 largest nonfinancial corporations and the 50 largest financial corporations. "While most of these directors sat on a single board, 562 sat on two or more boards: Five men held six directorships each. In all, 1,404 directorships were held by multiple directors." Two hundred and thirty-three of the 250 corporations had at least one director who sat on the board of at least one other of the largest corporations. Most significantly, fully 297 interlocks involved companies which were competitors. "While illegal under the Clayton Act," observed Professor Dooley, "the law has not been effectively enforced, so that the institution of interlocking directorates continues to provide a vehicle for restricting competition. . . ."

Our own more recent survey of the boards of directors of the 50 largest industrial corporations identified eight apparent instances of illegal interlocks. John T. Connor, for example, is both a director of General Motors and Chairman of Allied Chemical, though Allied Chemical produces seat belts, shoulder harnesses, and airbags, all of which GM either presently manufactures or potentially could. Dean McGee is a director of General Electric and Chairman of Kerr-McGee, though both sell nuclear fuels. Henry S. Wingate is a director of both U.S. Steel and International Nickel Company of Canada, both of which mine nickel, iron ore, and other competing metals.

Even beyond inadequate enforcement of its provisions, section 8 only forbids interlocks among competitive corporations. Interlocks among corporations which provide services, supplies,

* In the past three years the Federal Trade Commission has begun to enforce the Act, bringing three major actions, the most important of which required seven directors common to the boards of 12 competing oil and gas corporations to resign. More recently the Justice Department awoke from its long slumber and brought an action in 1971 against the Bank of America holding company and certain insurance companies which allegedly competed in providing designated services.

funding, or distribution for each other equally violate the fundamental law that no man can serve two masters. They are also far more numerous. In 1974, the Center for Science in the Public Interest analyzed interlocking directorates and advisory committee connections of the eighteen largest United States oil corporations. They found 460 interlocking connections in all, including 132 interlocks with banks, 31 interlocks with insurance companies, 12 interlocks with utilities, 15 interlocks with transportation corporations, and 224 interlocks with manufacturing and distribution corporations. Oil company ties with banks (which supply capital), insurance companies (which provide an underwriting service), distribution companies (which distribute oil company products), and utilities, transportation, and manufacturing corporations (which purchase oil products) inevitably diminish the arm's length atmosphere in which effective competition thrives.

Such clubbishness, however, is typical of this nation's largest corporations. Our survey of the 50 largest industrial corporations and 10 largest commercial banks found that the 50 largest industrialists had 54 interlocks with the 10 leading commercial banks and 24 interlocks among themselves. Our survey also established that it has become a common practice for the leading commercial banks to bring together competitors on their boards of directors. For example, on its board Chase Manhattan unites directors from competing companies in four industries: industrial chemicals (Allied Chemical, Celanese, an Commercial Solvents Corporation); drugs (Pfizer and Squibb); paper goods (Celanese and International Paper); and oil (Exxon, Royal Dutch Petroleum, and StanJard Oil of Indiana). Continental Illinois brings together leading agricultural equipment producers Caterpillar Tractor and International Harvester; food producers Esmark and Kraftco; and railroads Chicago-Milwaukee and Illinois Central.

When interlocks are viewed on a city-by-city basis, it becomes clear that there are substantial social costs as well—as in the case of Minneapolis-St. Paul. In January 1971, Richard Gibson, a methodical staff reporter for the *Minneapolis Star*, described the social structure of a major industrial city by examining the boards of the 20 or so leading Twin City industrial corporations and eight leading banks. What he found was a tight little net or what he

called swapping: Burlington Northern placed its executive on the board of General Mills, and General Mills reciprocated by placing an executive on the board of Burlington Northern. Honeywell, Pillsbury, 3M, and Dayton Hudson just placed executives everywhere, as did the leading banks.

But Gibson went beyond the statistics and examined the personalities involved. He found that the boards of the 30 leading corporations in a major metropolitan area of some two million people were dominated by 19 men. Eight served on three or more boards; five men served on four boards; six served on five boards or more. Crucially, these were the men that served as chairmen or led the key committees. All but one of these men, Professor Walter Heller, was a corporate executive. Fourteen of the 19 were corporate chief executives. Examined in social terms, the economy of Minneapolis looks like an oligarchy.

Certainly no one would argue that all interlocks, whether among competitors, in financing, supply, or distribution relations, direct or indirect, lead to collusive behavior. But it is unnecessary that any interlock occur. There are sufficient directors available so that each board may be staffed by disinterested persons. The costs of interlocks—favoritism, joint price or output actions, discouragement of entrepreneurs—must be weighed against what are at best negligible advantages.

Conflict of interests can also occur when large industrial corporations invite their investment banker or outside counsel to serve on their boards. For the investment banker, especially, this creates a stark division of loyalty. In addition to underwriting security offerings and related corporate financial services, he typically does investment counseling, employs brokers, and administers mutual funds. He is just as likely to perceive his primary obligation to run to his investment clients as to the shareholders of the corporation he directs. As one top executive explained, "As soon as you have an investment banker [on the board], you put yourself in a position where one group of shareholders might be favored at the expense of other shareholders."

A worse situation occurs when the investment banker is favored at the expense of *all* shareholders. J. M. Juran and J. Lou-

den, authors of the American Management Association's study, *The Corporate Director*, cited instances where investment bankers have been guilty of guiding the company into a poor acquisition to create a need for selling securities. Investment banker-directors have insisted on being involved—for a fee—when the corporation seeks to borrow money from an insurance company or other lender. And when a corporation has an investment banker on its board, it becomes very difficult to transact business with other investment bankers. "Having a senior partner of an investment banking firm on our board is notice to the world that we are his captive client," said one corporate president. "Of course this is the main reason investment bankers want to be on so many boards. They think of board membership as a very good way of assuring that the business of the company goes only to them. It's a sort of Operation Stakeout. It tags the company as belonging to one particular firm."

A similar division of loyalties occurs when corporate counsel serves on the board. Attorneys have a financial interest to increase the corporation's law bills, rather than economize for its shareholders. This inability of lawyer-directors to give disinterested counsel has led some law firms to discourage partners from serving on clients' boards. For example, New York City's Debevoise, Plimpton, Lyons and Gates will not permit a partner to go on a board without the approval of the firm as a whole. Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, also of New York, flatly prohibits partners from becoming directors "except in extenuating cases." Nonetheless, an exhaustive 1971-72 study of some 12,000 companies, which filed information statements with the SEC, found that approximately one in six employs an attorney from the company's outside counsel as a director.

Aggravating the costs to shareholders of these structural conflicts of interest is the tolerance by modern corporate law of self-enriching executive conduct. As early as an 1846 Supreme Court opinion, the rule was well established that any contract between an interested director and his corporation was voidable at the mere insistence of the corporation or any of its shareholders regardless of the fairness or unfairness of the transaction. Professor Harold Marsh explained why:

Under this rule it mattered not the slightest that there was a majority of so-called disinterested directors who approved the contract. The courts stated that the corporation was entitled to the unprejudiced judgment and advice of all of its directors and therefore it did no good to say that the interested director did not participate in the making of the contract on behalf of the corporation. . . .

By 1880, this principle "appeared to be impregnable. . . . It was stated in ringing terms by virtually every decided case, with arguments which seemed irrefutable, and it was sanctioned by age." One scholar termed this the "fundamental law of morals and of human nature" and identified its Biblical origin: "No man can serve two masters." "Fraud is too cunning and evasive," reasoned a New Jersey court, "for courts to establish a rule that invites its presence."

Today this principle is dead. The Delaware General Corporation Law not only tolerates interested conduct by corporate officers and directors; it has made self-dealing the norm.

Under current Delaware law, the chief executive of a corporation and other senior corporate executives may serve on the board of directors or compensation committee which: (1) sets executive salaries; (2) sells or purchases property from corporate executives; (3) loans money—on a secured or unsecured basis; with or without interest—to corporate executives; and (4) establishes pension plans, profit sharing plans, stock bonuses, retirement, benefit, incentive, and compensation plans (including "phantom stock"—a risk-free, cost-free stock option plan), trusts; health insurance; or deferred income plans for such corporate officers or their dependents.

Not only may corporate officers engage in such self-dealing but shareholders under Delaware law are nearly powerless to minimize the amount of corporate largess top executives pay themselves. Any contract or transaction between the corporation and an interested executive is permissible as long as it is "fair." But, in Delaware, fairness is presumed. Professor Ernest Folk, the leading commentator of Delaware's General Corporation Law, explains that "Given Delaware's presumption of sound business judgment with respect to board decisions, the courts will try to determine whether the decision can be attributed to any rational business pur-

pose, and if so, there will be no judicial preemption of the decision."

There seem to be few practical limits to this doctrine. For example, if a corporate chief executive were so graceless as to embezzle \$500,000, there is little question that even in Delaware he would be required to return the money and would be subject to criminal prosecution. Yet if that same corporate executive raised his salary \$500,000 and received the approval of a board of directors he selected, there is equally little question that a Delaware court would term this "fair"—so long as the chief executive could point to similar salary increases in his industry or received the \$500,000 through an "incentive bonus" or profit participation plan.

In the absence of judicial limitations, excessive remuneration has become the norm. In 1974 the executive compensation (salary, bonus, deferred income, and directors' fees) of the highest paid executive at the 50 largest industrial corporations was approximately \$400,000—or about as much in one year as many of their employees earn in a lifetime and two and one-half times the average executive compensation of \$145,000 earned by the highest paid executive at the 50 largest industrial corporations in 1963.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, top executive salaries do not generally decrease in response to a decline in corporate sales or profits. In the recessionary years 1970–1973, Professor Wilbur Laxwell, a leading authority on executive compensation, found that the "mean" salary for the top executive at 50 large manufacturing corporations increased steadily from \$251,867 in 1970, to \$287,759 in 1971, \$323,802 in 1972, and \$389,277 in 1973.

But salary, bonus, and deferred income are only the most obvious benefits appropriated by corporate chieftains. Equally important is ownership income. Nearly every large industrial corporation offers its top executives stock options. These options allow executives to buy shares of stock in their corporation at a fixed price at any time or at specified times—often with the help of company-secured low interest loans or interest-free loans—and subsequently sell them.

From the shareholder's point of view, the result is a classic case of "heads we lose, tails you win." Over time, executives are

able to build up a substantial fortune in corporate stock without personal risk. The more they do so, the more they dilute the value of other stockholders' shares.

We examined the stock holdings of the highest paid executives at the 50 largest industrial corporations to get some indication of the extent of executive stock holdings. From the start, we eliminated from consideration the seven highest paid chief executives whose stock holdings were either largely inherited or largely "founder's shares": Henry Ford II (Ford Motors), Robert Sarnoff (RCA), Brooks McCormick (International Harvester), Willard Rockwell (Rockwell International), Armand Hammer (Occidental Petroleum), Sanford McDonnell (McDonnell Douglas) and J. P. Grace (W. P. Grace). The 43 remaining chief executives were "employee" executives. Yet each owned an average of \$1,566,009 of his corporation's stock, according to the most recent proxy statements filed with the SEC and the closing stock prices of October 1, 1975.*

This crude figure illustrates three points. First, primarily at shareholder expense, the top executives of our largest corporations can, and often do, build up million-dollar fortunes in corporate stock on top of their substantial cash and deferred compensation. Second, the income of top executives is significantly increased each year by dividends from their corporate stock. Using our 43 top executives as an example again, each received an average of \$60,382 in dividend income in 1974 above and beyond a \$400,000 salary. Third, each top executive will further be enriched by increases in the price of the stock. Professor I. Velleen has determined that a similar list of chief executives at the fifty largest industrial corporations (after deleting "extreme values" such as inherited or founder's stockholdings) averaged \$220,087 per year in capital gains income for the four years 1960-63.

* This figure is admittedly a very crude approximation of ownership income. On the one hand, it does not distinguish the shares the executives purchase with their own money from those the company gave them through stock options, stock bonuses, or loan arrangements. On the other hand, it understates the amount of ownership income of these executives by making no allowance for the fact that corporate chief executives frequently sell stock they own in their own corporation and put their money in other investments.

Additionally, pension or retirement benefits have swollen. McKinsey and Company's 1975 Executive Compensation Survey found that all but one of 577 major U.S. corporations studied had a pension or profit-sharing retirement plan to pay former executives a fixed income each year after they retire. Almost half of the companies provide either a thrift or savings plan or a profit-sharing plan in addition to the pension plan. Our own survey found that the 21 chief executives of the 50 largest corporations who disclosed their estimated annual retirement benefits anticipated an income of \$133,910 per year after they retire. And corporate executives also enjoy other benefits such as life and medical insurance; free medical service; educational grants for their children; indemnification insurance; company apartments; country club membership; luncheon or dinner club membership; chauffeur-driven cars; free legal and tax counseling; personal financial counseling; expense accounts; and other amenities. This myriad of stock bonus, insurance, and benefit programs increases the income of corporate chiefs by approximately 50-75 percent above their \$400,000 direct remuneration to an actual income of approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 per year.

Yet if excessive remuneration were a conflict of interest confined to the corporate chief executive, it would seem small once it was divided by the total number of shares in most large industrial corporations. What makes the executive compensation conflict truly expensive is that the corporate chief executive not only sets his own salary but also determines the remuneration of other executives all the way down the line. It is clearly in the corporate chief executive's personal interest to seek the greatest possible rewards for his subordinates as well as himself. For a corporate chief who can "deliver" high salaries increases the personal loyalty of his subordinates. And the higher his subordinates' income, the higher the chief executive's income must be.

A good illustration of this is General Electric, where in 1974 Reginald Jones, the chairman, received a compensation of \$501,200. Walter Dance, Jack Parker, and Herman Weiss, the next three highest paid executives, received \$400,750; \$400,500; and \$400,000, respectively. The next 107 highest paid officers averaged direct compensation of \$121,240. Aggregate figures for "executive groups" at the other 50 largest industrial corporations were approx-

imately the same. In the average corporation, the 31 or so officers ranked immediately below the five highest paid executives received an average of \$99,256 in direct remuneration, which would equal approximately \$150,000 imputing the present value of stock bonus programs, retirement benefits, insurance, and other perquisites.

A compensation system is obviously askew when a private business corporation must pay a chief executive compensation and benefits of over \$600,000 when this is 15 times the \$40,000 or so the United States government must pay its highest ranking general, regulator, or Senator. Or when it must pay its next 20-100 senior executives an average of \$150,000 each when the federal government expends a maximum of \$38,000 per year to hire its highest ranking civil servants, and California, this nation's largest state, pays its governor \$49,000.

This is not to deny that the entrepreneur or corporate founder who, at substantial risk, introduces a new or better good or service should not be given a substantial incentive to make an unusual personal contribution to society. But we are concerned here with the administrators of large industrial corporations who, at minimal personal risk, serve as the bureaucrats of private industry. These individuals receive their staggeringly large salaries and stock options by rising through executive ranks—in exactly the same way that government's civil servants rise through civil service ranks—and by then exploiting the laxity of state corporate laws that their predecessors helped write.

Remedies

REVAMPING THE BOARD

The modern corporation is akin to a political state in which all powers are held by a single clique. The senior executives of a large firm are essentially not accountable to any other officials within the firm. These are precisely the circumstances that, in a democratic political state, require a separation of powers into different branches of authority. As James Madison explained in the *Federalist* No. 47:

The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary,

self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny. Were the federal constitution, therefore, really chargeable with this accumulation of power, or with a mixture of powers, having a dangerous tendency to such an accumulation, no further arguments would be necessary to inspire a universal reprobation of the system.

A similar concern over the unaccountability of business executives historically led to the elevation of a board of directors to review and check the actions of operating management. As a practical matter, if corporate governance is to be reformed, it must begin by returning the board to this historical role. The board should serve as an internal auditor of the corporation, responsible for constraining executive management from violations of law and breach of trust. Like a rival branch of government, the board's function must be defined as separate from operating management. Rather than pretending directors can "manage" the corporation, the board's role as disciplinarian should be clearly described. Specifically, the board of directors should:

- establish and monitor procedures that assure that operating executives are informed of and obey applicable federal, state, and local laws;
- approve or veto all important executive management business proposals such as corporate by-laws, mergers, or dividend decisions;
- hire and dismiss the chief executive officer and be able to disapprove the hiring and firing of the principal executives of the corporation; and
- report to the public and the shareholders how well the corporation has obeyed the law and protected the shareholders' investment.

It is not enough, however, to specify what the board should do. State corporations statutes have long provided that "the business and affairs of a corporation shall be managed by a board of directors," yet it has been over a century since the boards of the largest corporations have actually performed this role. To reform the corporation, a federal chartering law must also specify the manner in which the board performs its primary duties.

First, to insure that the corporation obeys federal and state laws, the board should designate executives responsible for compliance with these laws and require periodic signed reports describing the effectiveness of compliance procedures. Mechanisms to administer spot checks on compliance with the principal statutes should be created. Similar mechanisms can insure that corporate "whistle blowers" and nonemployee sources may communicate to the board—in private and without fear of retaliation—knowledge of violations of law.

Second, the board should actively review important executive business proposals to determine their full compliance with law, to preclude conflicts of interest, and to assure that executive decisions are rational and informed of all foreseeable risks and costs. But even though the board's responsibility here is limited to approval or veto of executive initiatives, it should proceed in as well-informed a manner as practicable. To demonstrate rational business judgment, the directorate should require management "to prove its case." It should review the studies upon which management relied to make a decision, require management to justify its decision in terms of costs or rebutting dissenting views, and, when necessary, request that outside experts provide an independent business analysis.

Only with respect to two types of business decisions should the board exceed this limited review role. The determination of salary, expense, and benefit schedules inherently possesses such obvious conflicts of interest for executives that only the board should make these decisions. And since the relocation of principal manufacturing facilities tends to have a greater effect on local communities than any other type of business decision, the board should require management to prepare a "community impact statement." This public report would be similar to the environmental impact statements presently required by the National Environmental Policy Act. It would require the corporation to state the purpose of a relocation decision; to compare feasible alternative means; to quantify the costs to the local community; and to consider methods to mitigate these costs. Although it would not prevent a corporation from making a profit-maximizing decision, it would require the corporation to minimize the costs of relocation decisions to local communities.

To accomplish this restructuring of the board requires the institutionalization of a new profession: the full-time "professional" director. Corporate scholars frequently identify William O. Douglas' 1940 proposal for "salaried, professional experts [who] would bring a new responsibility and authority to directorates and a new safety to stockholders" as the origin of the professional director idea. More recently, corporations including Westinghouse and Texas Instruments have established slots on their boards to be filled by full-time directors. Individuals such as Harvard Business School's Myles Mace and former Federal Reserve Board chairman William McChesney Martin consider their own thoroughgoing approach to boardroom responsibilities to be that of a "professional" director.

To succeed, professional directors must put in the substantial time necessary to get the job done. One cannot monitor the performance of Chrysler's or Gulf's management at a once-a-month meeting; those firms' activities are too sweeping and complicated for such ritual oversight. The obvious minimum here is an adequate salary to attract competent persons to work as full-time directors and to maintain the independence of the board from executive management.

The board must also be sufficiently staffed. A few board members alone cannot oversee the activities of thousands of executives. To be able to appraise operating management, the board needs a trim group of attorneys, economists, and labor and consumer advisors who can analyze complex business proposals, investigate complaints, spot-check accountability, and frame pertinent inquiries.

The board also needs timely access to relevant corporate data. To insure this, the board should be empowered to nominate the corporate financial auditor, select the corporation's counsel, compel the forwarding and preservation of corporate records, require all corporate executives or representatives to answer fully all board questions respecting corporate operations, and dismiss any executive or representative who fails to do so.

This proposed redesign for corporate democracy attempts to make executive management accountable to the law and shareholders without diminishing its operating efficiency. Like a judi-

ciary within the corporation, the board has ultimate powers to judge and sanction. Like a legislature, it oversees executive activity. Yet executive management substantially retains its powers to initiate and administer business operations. The chief executive officer retains control over the organization of the executive hierarchy and the allocation of the corporate budget. The directors are given ultimate control over a narrow jurisdiction: Does the corporation obey the law, avoid exploiting consumers or communities, and protect the shareholders' investment? The executive contingent retains general authority for all corporate operations.

No doubt there will be objections that this structure is too expensive or that it will disturb the "harmony" of executive management. But it is unclear that there would be any increased cost in adopting an effective board. The true cost to the corporation could only be determined by comparing the expense of a fully paid and staffed board with the savings resulting from the elimination of conflicts of interest and corporate waste. In addition, if this should result in a slightly increased corporate expense, the appropriateness must be assessed within a broader social context: should federal and state governments or the corporations themselves bear the primary expense of keeping corporations honest? In our view, this cost should be placed on the corporations as far as reasonably possible.

It is true that an effective board will reduce the "harmony" of executive management in the sense that the power of the chief executive or senior executives will be subject to knowledgeable review. But a board which monitors rather than rubber-stamps management is exactly what is necessary to diminish the unfettered authority of the corporate chief executive or ruling clique. The autocratic power these individuals presently possess has proven unacceptably dangerous: it has led to recurring violations of law, conflicts of interest, productive inefficiency, and pervasive harm to consumers, workers, and the community environment. Under normal circumstances there should be a healthy friction between operating executives and the board to assure that the wisest possible use is made of corporate resources. When corporate executives are breaking the law, there should be no "harmony" whatsoever.

ELECTION OF THE BOARD

Restructuring the board is hardly likely to succeed if boards remain as homogeneously white, male, and narrowly oriented as they are today. Dissatisfaction with current selection of directors is so intense that analysts of corporate governance, including Harvard Law School's Abram Chayes, Yale political scientist Robert Dahl, and University of Southern California Law School Professor Christopher Stone, have each separately urged that the starting point of corporate reform should be to change the way in which the board is elected.

Professor Chayes, echoing John Locke's principle that no authority is legitimate except that granted "the consent of the governed," argues that employees and other groups substantially affected by corporate operations should have a say in its governance:

Shareholder democracy, so-called, is misconceived because the shareholders are not the governed of the corporations whose consent must be sought. . . . Their interests are protected if financial information is made available, fraud and overreaching are prevented, and a market is maintained in which their shares may be sold. A priori, there is no reason for them to have any voice, direct or representational, in [corporate decision making]. They are no more affected than nonshareholding neighbors by these decisions. . . .

A more spacious conception of 'membership,' and one closer to the facts of corporate life, would include all those having a relation of sufficient intimacy with the corporation or subject to its powers in a sufficiently specialized way. Their rightful share in decisions and the exercise of corporate power would be exercised through an institutional arrangement appropriately designed to represent the interests of a constituency of members having a significant common relation to the corporation and its power.

Professor Dahl holds a similar view: "[W]hy should people who own shares be given the privileges of citizenship in the government of the firm when citizenship is denied to other people who also make vital contributions to the firm?" he asks rhetorically. "The people I have in mind are, of course, employees and customers, without whom the firm could not exist, and the general

public, without whose support for (or acquiescence in) the myriad protections and services of the state the firm would instantly disappear. . . .” Yet Dahl finds proposals for interest group representation less desirable than those for worker self-management. He also suggests consideration of codetermination statutes such as those enacted by West Germany and ten other European and South American countries under which shareholders and employees separately elect designated portions of the board.

From a different perspective, Professor Stone has recommended that a federal agency appoint “general public directors” to serve on the boards of all the largest industrial and financial firms. In certain extreme cases such as where a corporation repeatedly violates the law, Stone recommends that the federal courts appoint “special public directors” to prevent further delinquency.

There are substantial problems with each of these proposals. It seems impossible to design a general “interest group” formula which will assure that all affected constituencies of large industrial corporations will be represented and that all constituencies will be given appropriate weight. Even if such a formula could be designed, however, there is the danger that consumer or community or minority or franchisee representatives would become only special pleaders for their constituents and otherwise lack the loyalty or interest to direct generally. This defect has emerged in West Germany under codetermination. Labor representatives apparently are indifferent to most problems of corporate management that do not directly affect labor. They seem as deferential to operating executive management as present American directors are. Alternatively, federally appointed public directors might be frozen out of critical decision-making by a majority of “privately” elected directors, or the appointing agency itself might be biased.

Nonetheless, the essence of the Chayes-Dahl-Stone argument is well taken. The boards of directors of most major corporations are, as CBS’s Dan Rather criticized the original Nixon cabinet, too much like “twelve grey-haired guys named George.” The quiescence of the board has resulted in important public and, for that matter, shareholder concerns being ignored.

An important answer is structural. The homogeneity of the board can only be ended by giving to each director, in addition to a

general duty to see that the corporation is profitably administered, a separate oversight responsibility, a separate expertise, and a separate constituency so that each important public concern would be guaranteed at least one informed representative on the board. There might be nine corporate directors, each of whom is elected to a board position with one of the following oversight responsibilities:

1. Employee welfare
2. Consumer protection
3. Environmental protection and community relations
4. Shareholder rights
5. Compliance with law
6. Finances
7. Purchasing and marketing
8. Management efficiency
9. Planning and research

By requiring each director to balance responsibility for representing a particular social concern against responsibility for the overall health of the enterprise, the problem of isolated “public” directors would be avoided. No individual director is likely to be “frozen out” of collegial decision-making because all directors would be of the same character. Each director would spend the greater part of his or her time developing expertise in a different area; each director would have a motivation to insist that a different aspect of a business decision be considered. Yet each would simultaneously be responsible for participating in all board decisions, as directors now are. So the specialized area of each director would supplement but not supplant the director’s general duties.

Although not a symmetrical analogy, the most successful precedent for dividing the representative responsibilities and constituencies is, of course, the Constitution of the United States. There, too, a basic question was one of motivation: How to design a political administration which would retain an equal respect for the rights of all of its citizens. Only by arranging “ambition . . . to counteract ambition” did the Federalists believe such respect would endure. By granting the President, the two houses of Congress, and the judiciary different geographic constituencies, different

terms, and different duties, the various factions of the nation's citizens were most likely to be insured some representation within the government. "Hence a double security arises to the rights of the people. The different governments will control each other, at the same time that each will be controlled by itself," explained Madison in *Federalist No. 51*.

In recent years, some business corporations have also perceived the advantages of creating constituent voices within the structure of the firm. Reverend Leon Sullivan, the only black director on General Motors' board, has made plain that he considers it his special responsibility to advance the interests of GM's black employees and dealers. His representation, among other things, has led to an increase in the number of blacks being trained to be GM executives. Gillette's Vice President for Product Integrity, Robert Giovaecchini, is said to perform a similar role. Although not a member of the board, Mr. Giovaecchini has been given the authority to recall any Gillette product, quash any advertising claim, or order any packaging change he feels is necessary to protect the company's consumers.

Only by institutionalizing the duties and power that individuals like Reverend Sullivan and Robert Giovaecchini hold can responsible corporate government be brought to each large firm.

For in most giant corporations, no specific executive official or board member is responsible for protecting the interests of employees, consumers, the environment, or local communities. No one outside of senior management reviews the most important business decisions to assure their compliance with law, financial integrity, efficiency, or long-term corporate goals. Because these concerns become everybody's general interest, they become nobody's particular interest—and often go unattended.

To maintain the independence of the board from the operating management it reviews also requires that each federally chartered corporation shall be directed by a purely "outside" board. No executive, attorney, representative, or agent of a corporation should be allowed to serve simultaneously as a director of that same corporation. Directorial and executive loyalty should be furthered by an

absolute prohibition of interlocks. No director, executive, general counsel, or company agent should be allowed to serve more than one corporation subject to the Federal Corporate Chartering Act.

Several objections may be raised. First, how can we be sure that completely outside boards will be competent? As elaborated subsequently, corporate campaign rules will be redesigned to emphasize qualifications. This will allow shareholder voters to make rational decisions based on information clearly presented to them. It is also a fair assumption that shareholders, given an actual choice and role in corporate governance, will want to elect the men and women most likely to safeguard their investments.

A second objection is that once all interlocks are proscribed and a full-time outside board required, there will not be enough qualified directors to staff all major firms. This complaint springs from that corporate mentality which, accustomed to 60-year-old white male bankers and businessmen as directors, makes the norm a virtue. In fact, if we loosen the reins on our imagination, America has a large, rich, and diverse pool of possible directorial talent from academics and public administrators and community leaders to corporate and public interest lawyers.

But directors should be limited to four two-year terms so that boards do not become stale. And no director should be allowed to serve on more than one board at any one time. Although simultaneous service on two or three boards might allow key directors to "pollinize" directorates by comparing their different experiences, this would reduce their loyalty to any one board, jeopardize their ability to fully perform their new directorial responsibilities, and undermine the goal of opening up major boardrooms to as varied a new membership as is reasonable.

The shareholder electoral process should be made more democratic as well. Any shareholder or allied shareholder group which owns .1 percent of the common voting stock in the corporation or comprises 100 or more individuals and does not include a present executive of the corporation, nor act for a present executive, may nominate up to three persons to serve as directors. This will exclude executive management from the nomination process. It also increases the likelihood of a diverse board by preventing any one or

two sources from proposing all nominees. To prevent frivolous use of the nominating power, this proposal establishes a minimum shareownership condition.

Six weeks prior to the shareholders' meeting to elect directors, each shareholder should receive a ballot and a written statement on which each candidate for the board sets forth his or her qualifications to hold office and purposes for seeking office. All campaign costs would be borne by the corporation. These strict campaign and funding rules will assure that all nominees will have an equal opportunity to be judged by the shareholders. By preventing directorates from being bought, these provisions will require board elections to be conducted solely on the merit of the candidates.

Only the actual or "beneficial" owners of stock should be eligible to vote. Financial intermediaries shall be required to "pass through" voting rights in approximately the same manner that present New York and American Stock Exchange rules require broker-dealers to "pass through" proxies and corporate reports to shareholders owning stock in street name accounts. Already a number of major firms, including Sears, Roebuck, General Motors, McDonnell Douglas, and United States Steel, "pass through" voting rights to hundreds of thousands of employees holding stock in joint pension funds.

Finally, additional provisions will require cumulative voting and forbid "staggered" board elections. Thus any shareholder faction capable of jointly voting approximately 10 percent of the total number of shares cast may elect a director.

A NEW ROLE FOR SHAREHOLDERS

The difficulty with this proposal is the one that troubled Juvenal two millennia ago: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*, or, Who shall watch the watchmen? Without a full-time body to discipline the board, it would be so easy for the board of directors and executive management to become friends. Active vigilance could become routinized into an uncritical partnership. The same board theoretically elected to protect shareholder equity and internalize law might instead become management's lobbyist.

Relying on shareholders to discipline directors may strike many as a dubious approach. Historically, the record of share-

holder participation in corporate governance has been an abysmal one. The monumental indifference of most shareholders is worse than that of sheep; sheep at least have some sense of what manner of man they follow. But taken together, the earlier proposals—an outside, full-time board, nominated by rival shareholder groups and voted on by beneficial owners—will increase involvement by shareholders. And cumulative voting insures that an aroused minority of shareholders—even one as small as 9 or 10 percent of all shareholders—shall have the opportunity to elect at least one member of the board.

But that alone is hardly sufficient. At a corporation the size of General Motors, an aggregation of 10 percent of all voting stock might require the allied action of over 200,000 individuals—which probably could occur no more than once in a generation. To keep directors responsive to law and legitimate public concerns requires surer and more immediate mechanisms. In a word, it requires arming the victims of corporate abuses with the powers to swiftly respond to them. For only those employees, consumers, racial or sex minorities, and local communities harmed by corporate deprivations can be depended upon to speedily complain. By allowing any victim to become a shareholder and by permitting any shareholder to have an effective voice, there will be the greatest likelihood of continuing scrutiny of the corporation's directorate. Shareholder involvement can be further enhanced by the disclosures discussed in the next chapter, by the opportunity to attend periodically scheduled directors' meetings to ask questions or present grievances, and by reform of the shareholder derivative action so that any investor who identifies a corporate violation of law may bring lawsuit without risk of financial loss.

For the purpose of motivating the board to perform its intended role, however, it is appropriate to inject shareholders further into corporate governance wherever they have a financial or other incentive to perform effectively.

Six weeks before a vote on any fundamental transaction—which can be defined as executive proposals involving the purchase, sale, lease, merger, consolidation, financing, refinancing, dissolution, or liquidation of assets equal to, say, 10 percent of the corporation's total assets or over \$100 million, or the authorization

of corporate securities in any amount—the board should forward a written statement to the shareholders explaining the transaction, the vote by which the transaction was approved by the board, the reasons why members of the board approved the transaction, the reasons why other members opposed it, and the foreseeable costs and risks of implementing the proposal. This provision would provide for shareholder votes on all business decisions above a certain minimum size, however named. By requiring directors to publicly elaborate their reasoning—reasoning which may be judged not only during this vote but also during subsequent board elections or mismanagement suits—there would be a powerful incentive for directors to police themselves.

A complementary provision should allow any shareholder or allied shareholder group holding stock equal to a minimum of one percent of all outstanding stock to simultaneously publish a dissenting view or, at any time, to propose amendments to the corporate charter or bylaws.

AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Shareholders are not the only ones with an incentive to review decisions of corporate management; nor, as Professors Chaves and Dahl argue, are shareholders the only persons who should be accorded corporate voting rights. The increasing use by American corporations of technologies and materials that pose direct and serious threats to the health of communities surrounding their plants requires the creation of a new form of corporate voting right. When a federally chartered corporation engages, for example, in production or distribution of nuclear fuels or the emission of toxic air, water, or solid waste pollutants, citizens whose health is endangered should not be left, at best, with receiving money damages after a time-consuming trial to compensate them for damaged property, impaired health, or even death.

Instead, upon finding of a public health hazard by three members of the board of directors or 3 percent of the shareholders, a corporate referendum should be held in the political jurisdiction affected by the health hazard. The referendum would be drafted by the unit triggering it—either the three board members or a designate of the shareholders. The affected citizens by majority vote

will then decide whether the hazardous practice shall be allowed to continue. This form of direct democracy has obvious parallels to the initiative and referendum procedures familiar to many states—except that the election will be paid for by a business corporation and will not necessarily occur at a regular election.

What would happen to the local community if it voted to close a dangerous plant? Three answers seem reasonable. First, the board of directors should have the opportunity to modify the local plant to reduce the health hazard. If the board chooses to do so, it should be allowed to submit its modification plan as a subsequent referendum for community approval. Second, if the corporation chooses to leave after the vote, it should be required to immediately repay the local community for all damages to its health and property by the outlawed activity. This valuation proceeding should occur in federal district court. If the corporation chooses to leave before the referendum vote, it should additionally be required to pay its local employees salaries for a reasonable interim period. Third, the referendum voting procedure should be flexible. Local communities should be given the opportunity to vote upon an initiative calling for the corporation to remedy a specific health hazard by a designated date as an alternative to one calling for immediate closing of a plant. Similarly, the board should be given the opportunity to submit a plan of modification simultaneously with the initial referendum vote.

This type of election procedure is necessary to give enduring meaning to the democratic concept of "consent of the governed." To be sure, this proposal goes beyond the traditional assumption that the only affected or relevant constituents of the corporation are the shareholders. But no longer can we accept the Faustian bargain that the continued toleration of corporate destruction of local health and property is the cost to the public of doing business. In an equitable system of governance, the perpetrators should answer to their victims.