

This month, I would like to pay tribute to three persons, Dr. Tony Lesperance, Dr. Gerald Lent and Scott Raine - Dr. Gerald Lent and Scott Raine for serving on the State Board of Wildlife Commissioners and Dr. Lesperance for serving as Director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture. I was terribly disappointed when our new Governor turned on these people as he did. I thought they were doing a superb job - standing up to government as they were. In today's world it takes a tremendous amount of courage to do as they were doing.

I know that Dr. Lesperance can be strong minded at times, but in today's world, Dr. Lesperance is precisely the kind of man we need in government - for he, during his tenure, more than anyone else I know of, was getting down to the business of cutting his budget and representing the needs of those in agriculture in such a way as they should be represented.

And as for Dr. Lent, I can not think of anyone, anywhere, that has done more to expose the unfair discrepancies and untruths in government over the years than Dr. Lent. I remember, back in the 1990's, when he almost singlehandedly stopped the corruption within NDOW whereby game tags were being given out to favored persons on a regular basis. If he had not done as he did, such tendencies would have only gotten worse over the years. We need more people in the world like Dr. Lent.

And as for Scott Raine, he too was trying to do the right thing - trying to stand up to the powers of government - along with several others that had been appointed to the State Board of Wildlife Commissioners during the Gibbons administration.

In my estimation, these men should have been honored, not persecuted as they were. But I suppose that's the way things are going here in the United State these days. Most of the problem is we now have far, far too much government. If I understand correctly, fifty percent of our nation's Gross National Product is now being absorbed by government - fifty percent! Think of what that means. Think of the power that persons in government now have.

Not only is government now taking fifty percent of that which we earn, but they regulate us to death as well. Think of what it is doing to our economy. Think of how wealthy we would all be if 75 to 80 percent of our citizenry were producing real wealth rather than only 50 percent. It's bad enough that we in the private sector are forced to produce the wealth for so many that produce so little, but they hinder us in every way they can via forcing unreasonable regulations upon us as well.

Worse however, is the politics that accompany such a situation. When there are so many people either working for government or who have made themselves dependant on government, think of the politics of it all. They out vote, out campaign and out maneuver we in the private sector year after year after year.

That is what happened to Tony Lesperance, and Scott Raine and Gerald Lent. They were out maneuvered by those in government. That's not to say that there were not persons

within the private sector that were helpful to those in government - for there are always those in the private sector that side with those in government. But all and all, our biggest problem here in America today is we have allowed government to grow far beyond what the founders envisioned. And if we do not do something about it, and do it soon, it may well destroy our nation.

On another note, I'd like to say a little about the fallacy of the need for refuge management here in our country. For those of you that are not familiar with Ruby Valley, let me explain a bit. In 1938, the government came in and bought out several family ranches in the southern portion of our valley for the purpose of creating a bird sanctuary called the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. I believe the Ruby Lake Refuge is made up of about 37,000 acres altogether, a good portion of which is covered by a wetland marsh called Ruby Lake. And right next to it - just to the North, is a second marsh called Franklin Lake. The difference being, that until just a few years ago, Franklin Lake has remained in private hands - and much of it still does, only for the fact that Nature Conservancy bought out the 7H ranch a few years ago and turned the ranch wetlands over to the Nevada Department of Wildlife - whereas the remainder of Franklin Lake proper has remained in the hands of my family.

Franklin Lake is not as large as is Ruby Lake - nor does it always retain water year long as does Ruby Lake. We have long been aware however, on good water years we raise far more waterfowl on Franklin Lake than are raised on Ruby Lake. But it was not until recently that we learned that this past August there were only 1,500 ducks counted on Ruby Lake, while 8,000 to 9,000 ducks were counted on Franklin Lake. Now think about this - here we have been told year after year for some thirty years or more - how bad cattle are - that they overgraze the range and wetland areas - that they destroy wildlife habitat, and how important it is that we see that more and more lands are taken out of private ownership and placed in the hands of government. Yet, when the truth comes out, we learn that the opposite is true.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I get so tired of seeing government taking all the gravy while spreading all the misinformation about the private sector as they do. I suppose having a refuge headquarters right next door, and having to watch what goes on there has not helped my disposition either. All that stimulus money that was supposed to go for shovel ready jobs - you know where that ended up. Most of it got hijacked by the agencies. At Ruby Lake, you can't believe the money they have been spending. They have farm tractors, they have crawlers, they have draglines, they have tools for overhauling equipment of every kind - everything is state of the art - yet they seldom use any of it. Worse - they had a great big shop and machine shed. It was not old at all - almost brand new - nothing wrong with it - more than large enough for anything they could ever do, yet they tore it down and built a new one. My gosh, if we lived as they do, we would think we were billionaires.

Anyway, recently, all this started me thinking. As near as I can determine, it is now costing the American people about \$500,000 to run the Ruby Lake Refuge each year. \$500,000, divided by 1,500 or so ducks that they are now supporting comes to \$333 per

duck fed and taken care of. While on Franklin Lake there were approximately 8,500 ducks, assessed. - with probably two thirds of those using Gardner lake lands during summer, as opposed to lands now controlled and managed by NDOW (which lands are now only moderately impacted by grazing late in season) which equates to roughly 5,666 ducks making a living on Gardner lake lands.

Now if we in the private sector were to receive as much money for feeding each duck as what the Fish and Wildlife Service is receiving - at \$333 per duck - it appears we Gardner's should be receiving about \$1,886,778 in duck payments each year. It sounds fair to me. I think we could live on that. Maybe I'll call Harry Reid - see what he thinks. He seems to have lots of money. That way we could do our part in stimulating the economy - pave our barnyard - plant shrubs around the barn and shop - help out the machinery dealerships, the nurseries and the paving companies - drive nice pickups - save our wildlife - go to lots of meetings - do a lot of planning - put out lots of propaganda - tell the world how badly we are needed. What do you think?