

OCTOBER 2, 1986

Materialism and mistrust is going to be the downfall of the Shortgrass Country. Around the coffee houses and the banks, you can feel the greed and suspicion. At least you'd think they'd show some respect for greybeards such as myself that are living proof that the grand struggles of life can be whipped back, if not completely overcome.

I am so sick and tired of their bad attitudes that I've been thinking about going on a straight cash policy. Jugkeepers and town merchants and gasoline grinders are so wrapped up in such trifles that the ends of their noses are so wrapped up in such trifles that the ends of their noses are dimmer than the far off horizons on a big ocean cruiser. I bet I've got six letters in the past week stating that due to the weak economy, billing and invoice procedures are going to be shortened. They are going to keep on messing around nit-picking their 90 and 100 day accounts until they'll be out a big chunk of their volume, plus a sizable amount of the tax advantage from their bad debt losses.

The influence of this credit hysteria has even affected the livestock truckers. On cow sale day last week at San Angelo, I was having lunch at a joint near the auction when the trucker that does my hauling walked by.

After a short greeting, I told him that we'd better get together soon to discuss the plans for moving my fall lambs and steer calves to town. Instead of an enthusiastic reply over the prospect of the business, he said, "Yes indeed, Noelke, we are going to need to do some planning about moving your stock, especially about the length of the credit terms on the freight bill."

With that announcement, he made his way on back to the other room, where I watched him and a couple more of those Angelo truckers hatch up more conspiracies against their better customers.

I started to go back there and remind that close relative to a lead goat and a forever friend to inflation how glad he was last year to get my check for the fall shipping in time for Christmas.

By holding off that late, I'd given him the opportunity to choose which tax year to report the income.

I don't think I ever knew a livestock trucker who wasn't more interested in the price of diesel, or what a secondhand tire cost, than he was in income taxes. In all the years I've been around those masters of dirt tracks and grand fabricators of speed trials and high gas mileage, I've yet to hear of their tax troubles.

Every January, our President in his State of the Nation address pleads with us to have faith and trust in the future and believe in our fellow men. For all the effect it has on these hombres I have to deal with, he might as well be summarizing all his old movies.

I sure haven't kept books on all the trucks that have been late getting to the ranch. Too much has happened to keep a tab on those resentments. As kind and charitable as I've been to everybody, I can't see why some of it hasn't been spread around.