More Federal Vs. State

Dear Editor:

I feel that the importance of the topic of state versus federal ownership justifies imposing upon your good humor and asking for space in your publication to make a very brief answer to the letter of Mr. Porter, recently appearing in your public forum column.

I dislike confusing a good argument with facts and logic, but sometimes it is necessary. There is so much misunderstanding and misleading statements in regard to this question it is no wonder many people are confused.

Let me put it this way, in answer to Mr. Porter. There is no difference between the tidelands of Texas and Louisiana and the vacant and unreserved public domain here in New Mexico in principle. They were both of such character that state ownership is much to be desired over federal and will serve to do the greatest good for the greatest number of our people, which after all, is the very foundation of our democratic form of government.

Since Territorial days only one and a half million acres of our original thirteen million acre grants have been sold, and the state still retains the mineral rights on those acres. This would indicate that there has never been any great rush to either steal or purchase the state lands. We now have over $160 million in permanent funds for our schools and institutions of higher learning. Not one cent taken from the federal lands in this state has ever been put aside for the future.

If the state had had control of its minerals and the vacant public domain we would now have over $300 million in our permanent funds and the state lands would be furnishing almost 50% of the school budget instead of the 17% it is supplying. The revenues from the natural resources which a bountiful nature placed beneath the soil of New Mexico would be going toward building this state and securing its economic future instead of being used to maintain a great bureau which, like all government agencies, administers uneconomically and wastefully.

To me, it is an insult to say "But it is doubtful that the interest of all the people can be delivered at any price into the hands of an individual." Our land commissioners have been hard working, sincere men who believe in state ownership. They were not elected to run an eleemosynary institution for the fifty states but to represent the people of New Mexico as best they know how.

Incidentally, Oliver LaFarge's remarks in Sunday August 30 "New Mexican" on the rape of our National Treasure should be enlarged upon to determine what that well informed person is thinking of.

Very truly yours,
R. R. Spurrier