

# OUR ZONING LAWS

BY L. ROY WILLIAMS

Just as game laws are enacted to preserve wild life, so, too, are zoning laws made to protect those whose investments are made with definite objectives in view.

These laws, being intended as protection, are worse than useless if they are to be set aside at will, as their promise of protection will then culminate only in detriment to those who accepted them as a pledge of investment security.

Perhaps the most definite example of insecurity and colossal detriment is placed before us in the attempt of powerful interests to set aside our zoning laws in order that Alphonzo Bell may establish a cement plant in the residential hills back of Santa Monica.

Only an organization with multiplied thousands of dollars could put up the tremendous political battle that has been waged by the so-called Bell interests in this effort to set aside the protection which the zoning laws are supposed to offer adjacent owners.

An ordinary business man would have no chance to carry on months of political activity, widespread publicity through community newspapers and constant lobbying at the City Hall.

Laws are enacted to curb the rich as well as the poor. Their protection also extends to rich and poor alike. Therefore, no special privileges should be given to any person which is not extended to others.

If Bell is to be given a spot zone for a cement mill in an exclusive residential section, then organizations composed of small stockholders should receive like privileges.

Personally, it makes little or no difference to me, in so far as the Santa Monica hills are concerned, but in our own community we are facing a problem which has proved disastrous to us. The Los Angeles Rock and Gravel Company established rock crushers in the Arroyo Seco many years ago, before adequate zoning laws were enacted.

Today we face an expense of \$800,000 in land purchases to get rid of a condition which will exist in another district if the Bell plant is allowed to once establish itself. It has taken almost ten years of strenuous effort to oust the Hawley interests and even then we are facing a condition of decreased property values and the total destruction of natural beauty in much of our own Arroyo Seco.

Had the property owners had the advantage of the present zoning laws when the Hawley crushers first sought entry into our district, this community would have been saved a fortune which now must be spent.

But if the zoning ordinances are to be set aside because of powerful influences, then we are ever in worse condition than before. High prices are paid for protected residential property because of zone restrictions. These values can be destroyed completely if our officials are permitted to set aside the protective legislation.

Therefore, it is apparent that either our zoning laws must be rigidly enforced or exclusive land values must be forgotten.—  
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