

because it would eliminate his most effective argument for ownership in common.

A SPURIOUS CLAIM

THE SUPPORTERS of these government electric projects and river valley development programs sometimes argue that the undertakings are "too big" for private enterprise to finance and build. To see the absurdity of this fallacy, it is only necessary to compare these government hydroelectric dams with some of our large private industries in various fields of production, including electricity. Private enterprise could raise the money for any project, if there were sufficient demand for the product or service. And would not the workmen and engineers work just as efficiently — probably more efficiently — for private management than for government management?

THE PROSPERITY ARGUMENT

NEXT, the advocates of common ownership will present the facts and the figures to show that government electricity projects have brought prosperity to the various river valleys where they are located. But they seem unaware that the various figures for increased prosperity in the Tennessee Valley since the establishment of TVA can be matched and exceeded by similar figures for many other regions where there is no valley authority. For example, one logical measurement would be the

yearly income per person in the various states. Department of Commerce figures show that, relative to all other states, the so-called seven TVA states as a group have lost ground since 1933 in per capita income payments. Tennessee itself was forty-second in rank when TVA was begun. And in 1949, Tennessee was still forty-second. Other comparisons, again on a relative or percentage basis, show that while the Southern states as a whole have made great economic gains in the last few years, Tennessee itself has generally lagged behind her neighboring states in these various economic gains.

It is true that there are now more homes and industries in Tennessee and the Pacific Northwest than there were before the advent of TVA and Bonneville. And the officials of those federal agencies do not hesitate to accept full credit for this increased industrial activity. How would they answer this question: Is the privately owned Consolidated Edison Company in New York City primarily responsible for the increased industrial activity there since that company was first established?

BEFORE TVA

FEW PERSONS now seem to remember that there were twenty-one private electric companies in the Tennessee Valley before TVA bought them up or otherwise drove them out. Before TVA destroyed the free market in its area, private power companies in Tennessee were producing all the electricity that the peo-