

Time To Tame The U.S. Mint

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Wallace, Idaho – It's really quite past time to tame the United States Mint. First the SOBs went for Bernard Von Nothaus's jugular by unilaterally declaring the silver Liberty dollars illegal for tender. And now, they propose to tell us exactly what we can and cannot do with our pennies and nickels.

Here is what the Mint said in its 14th December press release:

“Washington, D.C. -- The United States Mint has implemented regulations to limit the exportation, melting, or treatment of one-cent (penny) and 5-cent (nickel) United States coins, to safeguard against a potential shortage of these coins in circulation. The United States Mint is soliciting public comment on the interim rule, which is being published in the *Federal Register*.

“Prevailing prices of copper, nickel and zinc have caused the production costs of pennies and nickels to significantly exceed their respective face values. The United States Mint also has received a steady flow of inquiries from the public over the past several months concerning the metal value of these coins and whether it is legal to melt them.

“We are taking this action because the Nation needs its coinage for commerce,” said Director Ed Moy. “We don't want to see our pennies and nickels melted down so a few individuals can take advantage of the American taxpayer. Replacing these coins would be an enormous cost to taxpayers.”

“Specifically, the new regulations prohibit, with certain exceptions, the melting or treatment of all one-cent and 5-cent coins. The regulations also prohibit the unlicensed exportation of these coins, except that travelers may take up to \$5 in these coins out of the country, and individuals may ship up to \$100 in these coins out of the country in any one shipment for legitimate coinage and numismatic purposes. In all essential respects, these regulations are patterned after the Department of the Treasury's regulations prohibiting the exportation, melting, or treatment of silver coins between 1967 and 1969, and the regulations prohibiting the exportation, melting, or treatment of one-cent coins between 1974 and 1978.

“The new regulations authorize a fine of not more than \$10,000, or imprisonment of not more than five years, or both, against a person who knowingly violates the regulations. “In addition, by law, any coins exported, melted, or treated in violation of the regulation shall be forfeited to the United States Government.

“The regulations are being issued in the form of an interim rule, to be effective for a period of 120 days from the time of publication. The interim rule states that during a 30-day period from the date of publication, the public can submit written comments to the United States Mint on the regulations. Upon consideration of such comments, the Director of the United States Mint would then issue the final rule.

“Those interested in providing comments to the United States Mint regarding this interim rule must submit them in writing to the Office of Chief Counsel, United States Mint, 801 9th Street,

N.W., Washington D.C. 20220, by January 14, 2007. The interim rule appears on the United States Mint website at www.usmint.gov. The United States Mint will make public all comments it receives regarding this interim rule, and may not consider confidential any information contained in comments. “

Hmmmmmm. Herewith our comments, to be provided to the mint by the 14th January deadline:

Dear Mr. or Mrs. Mint:

Are you people insane? First, you declared trafficking in Norfed's Liberty coins a crime. This, despite the fact that there is no legal proscription against barter. If my neighbour wants to accept my silver in lieu of Federal Reserve Notes for an item we've agreed he will sell to me, that's nobody's business.

But this business of telling me what I can and cannot do with my pennies and nickels is a haughty, unconstitutional affront. An insult. Have you people not ever heard of the concept of private property? My pennies and nickels are my property. I obtained them through my labours (believe me, pennies are what writers get paid in most days). Now, forgive a little digression here, but are these pennies and nickels not my property, if I have obtained them legally?

When does what I do or not do with my property become the business of the United States Mint? What's next? Are you going to tell me I can't recycle my newspapers, because wood is scarce? Or re-impose that old law against removing the tags from my bedding? And if I obey your proposed directive and continue to accumulate pennies and nickels – because there is nothing else to do with them except as perhaps the poor-man's option play on base metals – are you later going to accuse me of hoarding? And will this then lead to another federal rule: That I cannot hoard my zinc pennies and nickels, and must surrender them to the United Snakes Government for a paper instrument that is any more not even a receipt or certificate?

Of course, we are ignoring the larger question of, Why is a stack of 100 pennies or 20 nickels worth more than a FedNote? You've admitted as much in your proposed and wretchedly repugnant regulation. You refer to “prevailing prices of copper, nickel and zinc” exceeding the face value of your coins. Well, Mr. and Mrs. Mint, whose fault is that? To the extent that you're in cahoots with the Federal Reserve, it's your fault. But it is more important to point out to you is that the real prices of copper, nickel, zinc, lead, silver and gold have been relatively static over the past three decades, indeed in steady decline over the past millennium. What's changed is the dollar's ability to purchase these metals. This is not our fault. It's the fault of your masters.

So to avoid your proposed sanctions, we are compelled to insist that future payment for our labours be made not in pennies or nickels, but in Norfed Liberty dollars, the melting-down of which you do not propose to criminalize.

However, brace yourselves for good news. You have an alternative to criminalizing our behaviour with regard to our private property. You can further debase the currency, just as you did with our quarters, dimes, halves and dollars back in the 1960s. You can issue, Ahem! the Wooden Nickel!

Now, we've been advised since we were knee-high to the proverbial grass-hopper not to take wooden nickels. But a wooden nickel issued by the U.S. Mint? Why, we could take that to the bank. Pay off W's multi-trillion-dollar debts to China and Europe with wooden nickels. Just declare the wooden nickel legal tender for all debts public and private – the way the paper

FedNote is so declared now. QED, all current account deficit problems solved. Yes, the Wooden Nickel. It's time is come.

From the Melting Pot and with no respect intended we remain,

Yours Truly,

The Guilty