

of them endorsed specific issues that undeniably molest persons by forcing some to conform to the viewpoints and ideas of others.

Liberty and License

OUR LEGISLATORS are honorable men. They are sincerely trying to do what they consider to be a necessary and not-always-pleasant job. But I wonder if many of them are not confusing liberty and license.

In order better to understand the reason for this possible confusion, let us consider the following example: A person uses his own honestly acquired money to build a house for \$10,000. In the process, he molests no person or group of persons—neither defames them, defrauds them, breaks his voluntary contracts with them, nor uses violence or the threat of violence against them.

Upon completion of the house, the owner decides to offer it for rent. For a reason known only to himself, he sets a rental price of \$500 a month. At that price, the house stays vacant—even though there may be many persons who would like to live in the house at a rental price which would pay the owner a four or six or eight per cent return on his investment.

Would not the word “freedom” be the proper term to describe such a condition of

non-molestation wherein no person would be using violence or the threat of violence to impose his will or viewpoint upon any other person? Since no one would be forced to buy and no one would be forced to sell, would that not be freedom?

Most of our governmental officials, backed by the vast majority of the American people, would surely reply to that question somewhat as follows: “No! You have described a condition of license wherein the people would be robbed and exploited or forced to remain in substandard housing, wherein freedom would be destroyed. In order to restore freedom, we would have to molest such unreasonable property owners to the extent of forcing them to conform to our idea of a proper price.”

Governmental Controls

AND so it would go as it almost always has. During the days of NRA, a merchant was accused of license if he sold *below* the government-set price. During the days of OPS, he was accused of license if he sold *above* the government-set price. Under “Fair Trade” laws, he is accused of license if he sells either above or below a price which is approved and enforced by government.

Freedom—a condition of non-molestation in the market place and everywhere else—is