

nies, in such case, have only escaped by *chance*.

Degrees of Irresponsibility Among Various Agencies

The same charge of irresponsibility is valid against other government boards, commissions, and corporations in varying degrees. The members of the Federal Reserve Board cannot be sued, in consequence of their monetary manipulations, for the loss of value of the money which people hold or have owed to them. The Securities and Exchange Commission will not make good losses suffered on the stock market as a result of its action or inaction. The National Labor Relations Board does not pay those workers to whom it awards back pay. The board which controls the Tennessee Valley Authority neither pays for the work it hires to be performed nor does it make good any losses incurred by the Authority.

It should be pointed out, however, that the boards which control government corporations do have some responsibilities. If there are degrees of irresponsibility, the board which directs the Tennessee Valley Authority is not as irresponsible as the Interstate Commerce Commission. The members of the board, or their agents, do undertake to provide services, do meet payrolls, do enter into

contracts, and are in some ways accountable for their actions.

Governmental irresponsibility is widespread, and does not necessarily involve violations of the principle of the separation of powers. The enactment and raising of the minimum wage has been irresponsible. By this action, Congress compels employers to pay a certain wage, but it takes no responsibility for this. That is, Congress does not raise the money to meet the payroll. If men lose their jobs because the employers cannot pay these wages, the individual members of Congress do not undertake to provide them with employment by paying them out of pocket. Nor, if the employer goes out of business, can he sue Congress for damages. Equally irresponsible are Congressional rulings regarding hours of labor.

Who Pays for Mistakes?

Something should be said under the heading of government financial responsibility for what its agents do. The United States government and the governments of states do engage in numerous business undertakings such as building roads, maintaining post offices, providing education, setting up corporations, and so forth. Government agencies are not liable for payment of damages in the same way that private corpora-

tions, partnerships, and individuals are. Governments can be sued, of course, with their permission. The winner of a suit against some government may recover damages. But there the similarity with private suits ends. Congress may appropriate money to pay damages, but the individual members of Congress do not pay for this; at least, they pay no more than any other taxpayer. This is another way of saying that the government is not responsible for injury done to others. It merely passes on the claim to the taxpayers. By contrast, private companies and individuals are responsible for injuries done.

Federal Aid Uncontrolled

Government responsibility is often attenuated, at best, but many of those who have labored to get government involved in more and more things have also worked to remove the last vestiges of responsibility. The public schools afford an example. It is a common saying that politics ought to be kept out of the schools. If those who say this meant that government should get out of the business of education, it would make sense. But that is not their meaning. They favor government support of education but do not wish political intrusion in the management or control of the

schools. They would have the populace support the schools but deny the people a voice in the management of the schools. For politics is the means by which popular consent is given and denied in America. Those who want to keep politics out of the schools want government support without government control, whether they know it or not. In short, they propose to make the public schools completely irresponsible.

Long strides have been taken toward making those who teach in schools and colleges responsible to no one. This has been accomplished to considerable extent under the doctrine of academic freedom and the practice of tenure. These two things combined are supposed to leave the teacher free to say and teach what he will (theoretically, though not practically, bounded by a restriction that it be within the area of his competency). He is responsible to no one for what he teaches.

Other Abuses of Privilege

Irresponsibility abounds in America today. Aid to Dependent Children permits men to father children and women to give birth to them without assuming the full responsibilities of rearing them. Various government agencies relieve children of the responsibility for caring for aged or in-