

neither of these faults would be repeated in his city, he was sure of the program's success, if only his city would participate — economic and moral facts of life be hanged! His anxiety to help his fellow man toward better living conditions clouded his reason.

As an analogy, let us suppose that numerous municipalities all over the country had recently decided to run their police cars on water rather than gasoline. Due to the national publicity and claims of success by municipal officials, the local city council considers switching its patrol cars from gasoline to water also. In reply to protests, the advocates suggest that the automotive maintenance engineers in the other communities, where failures have been rumored, surely must have been incompetent and unfit; but the members of the local city council, being men of wisdom, will find a qualified automotive engineer who, with their help, will make no mistakes. Will the switch succeed? No answer is required. The outcome of the scheme is clearly foreseen and one could not but wonder at the foolishness of its supporters.

Yet, is not an artificial, unnatural substitution of government urban renewal for the operation of free enterprise in a free market just as clearly unworkable?

A Rational Universe — and Our Lives Depend on It

Man exists in a rational universe, and doubtless would perish if it were not rational. Apple trees grow apples and can be counted on to produce apples, rather than grapes or blackberries, next harvest season. Oysters come from waters of the sea, not from the sands of the desert. The seasons of the year occur in never-ending rotation; never yet has winter followed spring. There is a steady certainty about mathematics. Even romantic musical tones are of certain quality and can be defined by the number of vibrations per second.

Over the centuries we have come to know that not all kinds of action will bring desired results in a rational universe. Only those causative actions consistent with the final results will succeed in producing them. Thus, the proper design of an airship will enable it to fly in the manner conceived by its creators. However, if a designer were inept, and an attempt were made to fly his creation, one could reasonably expect a frightening crash at the end of the runway. No matter that the designer was enthusiastic and ardently wished his airships to fly. No matter that this intent was good. Desire alone will not overcome the inconsistency of his

design with the natural laws of the universe — nor will the sincerity of his intent prevent the shattering devastation of airplane metal and human bodies.

Historian Clarence B. Carson, noting that industry, thrift, and frugality lead to independence, rewards, increased possessions, and savings, explains that "these actions are not good because they have good consequences; they have good consequences because they are good — i.e., that they are in keeping with the moral order. Self-respect begets respect for others; honor begets honesty; fidelity begets faithfulness."³ And the converse holds equally true: sincere, well-intended ignorance in the selection of a fallacious means begets nothing but despair and disappointment — evil begets evil!

³ *The American Tradition*. (Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1964), p. 238.

Expropriation of private property, without the owner's consent, falls squarely within the definition of stealing — certainly an immoral action. Yet, that is the standard procedure in Federal urban renewal programs, and the results are consistent with the immoral nature of the action, notwithstanding the good intentions of civic leaders seeking to provide better living conditions for residents of slum housing via government aid. An improper means, consequently and logically, must yield unhappy results.

One cannot run a gasoline engine on water. One cannot put an airship in flight with malformed wings. Elberta peaches will not grow from a clump of thistles, nor oysters from the desert sands. Nor can well-functioning communities be expected to sprout from the government-planned frustration of the lives of individuals. ♦

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

State Medication

THE WORST THING that can happen to a working man is to work for a company that isn't making money. Such a company, not growing, can never provide individuals with the security and opportunities they would like to have. The liberal who cries out for broad welfare measures and state control lacks inherent faith in people and in our free society. He treats them as though they were some type of chronic disease. As a result his approach has been one of continuous medication by the state.

L. C. MICHELON, Republic Steel,
to NAM Institute on Industrial Relations, 1964