other fuels for a market outlet. This tends to reduce the value of past investment in the industry. It leaves the industry less attractive than before as an outlet for productive resources. Neither new capital nor new employees can find desirable jobs in an industry from which customers have been driven by a tax, even though the tax be levied in the presumed interest of those who have retired.

## A Lesson To Be Learned

FROM a national point of view, it might not seem important what happens to the Anthracite Health and Welfare Fund or to its relatively few beneficiaries. But that point of view does not diminish the force of the blow to certain individuals. Nor should it diminish the force of the lesson for every other person in the United States. Lack of current revenue to maintain the promised rate of benefits is the sort of disaster which is likely to befall the beneficiaries of any poorly funded pension plan, whether it be privately or publicly financed.

Some advocates of broadened social security coverage may view the collapse of the anthracite fund as further evidence of the need to expand the federal program. But such a conclusion is unjustified. The failure of the security program for hard coal miners stands as a warn-



ing against any and every promise of security and independence which rests upon a questionable claim to the property or future productivity of other persons.

Regardless of the current economic outlook, there are no competitive industries in the United States today which have been guaranteed a prosperous future. No company, nor any industry, controls the buying whims of consumers or the forces of competition. The competitive economic arrangement allows individuals and even whole industries to fail—if and when capital, labor, and managerial resources are either pushed or pulled toward the more attractive employment opportunities which exist elsewhere. Unfortunately, there are no alternative employment opportunities for poorly funded pension rights. Labor, and management, and even invested capital to a certain extent, can move out of a failing business venture, as they have been moving out of anthracite mining operations. But the pension rights of retired hard coal miners are strictly dependent on the income from a declining industry. The inadequate pension fund is being depleted, with little chance of its being replenished.

Of course, there is no certainty that invested capital can be salvaged from a declining business. A pension right, though fully funded by ownership equity in a business, is vulnerable if