



## All Aboard

### *Editorial Foreword*

**T**HREE YEARS AGO, in THE FORUM for February, 1936, we made an editorial "Appeal to the Manufacturers" to take recovery into their own hands and to volunteer to the government to bring business and employment back to normal.

At that time we censured the National Association of Manufacturers, our nearest national approach to an employers' union, for a platform pervaded by truculence and obstructionism, a platform of negation that placed the entire blame for our economic woes on the interference of government with private business.

In place of this unconstructive program the Editor of THE FORUM proposed that the National Association of Manufacturers make the following proposal to the President and Congress of the United States:

Believing in personal initiative as the basis of the American System, we 1,500 manufacturers, representing 15,000,000 persons now gainfully employed, offer individually and collectively to relieve the federal government by employing an additional 5,000,000 persons now unemployed. For every 3 persons whom we now employ we will find occupation for 1 other. As the success of our businesses depends on efficient personnel and the introduction of labor-saving devices, we do not guarantee to set all these 5,000,000 to work in manufacturing. Many of them we shall employ in the medical, health, amusement, laboratory, and other so-called social services connected with our factories. We believe that in the end this will be no burden to us, as the higher stand-

ards of living demanded by our employees will stimulate their consuming power and increase production.

The three years have brought a great change in the attitude of the National Association of Manufacturers. In 1938 the Manufacturers chose for their President one of the most enlightened businessmen in the United States, Mr. Charles R. Hook, President of the American Rolling Mill Company. Mr. Hook's address to the last Congress of American Industry — "Making America Click" — recognizes alike the mistakes of business, labor, agriculture, and government. He calls for good will and co-operation all around and for business to resume its leadership so vigorously that government can again retire from its uncomfortable job of manager to its normal job of umpire.

Last year Mr. Hook was a member of the commission sent by the President to England and Sweden to study labor unions, returning with many constructive suggestions. His "Industrial Program for American Progress" now contains the bold-faced axiom that "America's progress depends upon a united effort of industry, commerce, agriculture, and labor in co-operation with government."

One result of this new attitude is that business is getting a fairer hearing in Washington. The monopoly investigation has so far proceeded on a generally high level of good-tempered intelligence. Congress shows a willingness

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to amend excesses in recent legislation, when experience proves that they regulate industry too severely. The TVA makes a fair bid for the purchase of private utilities in its territory. And our energetic new Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Harry L. Hopkins, offers his undivided co-operation with business.

Since 1929, there has been a tremendous change in the mood of our people. A passion for security has taken the place of speculation — a passion for security from unemployment, from unnecessary disease, from misinformation, and from crime and crookedness in high places as well as the menace of the underworld. This national sit-down strike of the consumer for security has resulted in vast legislative enactments and expenditures. We have insured bank deposits, employment, and old age and are about to underwrite the public health. Business practices have been disciplined, labor unions expanded, decent hours and pay enforced. Kidnaping has become a perilous profession, and financial criminals are suicides or behind the bars. Meanwhile legitimate enterprise has merely paused in its stride in order to gain time to secure security.

It has taken business executives, long accustomed to speed and production and huge profits, several years to comprehend this change of mood on the part of the public. They have naturally been aghast at the variety of new laws designed to improve and to regulate business practice. They have been incensed by the piling up of taxes that ate into their profits. Instead of rising above the new difficulties, too many businessmen have used up their energies in apoplectic denunciation of the government and have sat down on their jobs as completely as did striking labor in the automobile factories.

The reason that Sweden, with more radical social legislation than that of our New Deal, has weathered economic storms is not because she is a small country. The success of Sweden in combining reform with recovery is owing to the reasonableness of her conservatives and the social intelligence of her captains of industry. Swedish businessmen readjust their production to the social demands of the consumer and continue to produce, with sharper technical keenness and enterprise, to the utmost allowed them by the new limitations of humane legislation.

Take as an example a certain large industrialist in Sweden, a man responsible for several factories and for ships on several seas. This year, despite the threat of war, he is putting millions into new equipment. Taxes now take much more than half his profits. He estimates that with his new installations he will have to pay the bulk of his profits to government. Naturally, he is irked by this handicap on his risk and enterprise. Yet he goes ahead. He must feel some compensation in the general prosperity, the sense of internal security, the public health of his nation. And he has the personal satisfaction of doing a brilliant piece of work, in the face of new difficulties.

In these past ten years there have been many American businessmen who have never allowed political truculence to restrain their initiative. A celebrated case in point is that of the Du Ponts in Delaware. Some members of that able family spend half their time studying the new tax problems. But they carry on vigorously. Their laboratories are like universities. The minute one of their products becomes obsolete, they are prepared to commercialize new discoveries. Occasionally they protest but they never whine or whimper. *Les affaires sont les affaires*. Enterprise always finds a way in the state of Delaware.

### RECOVERY NOW

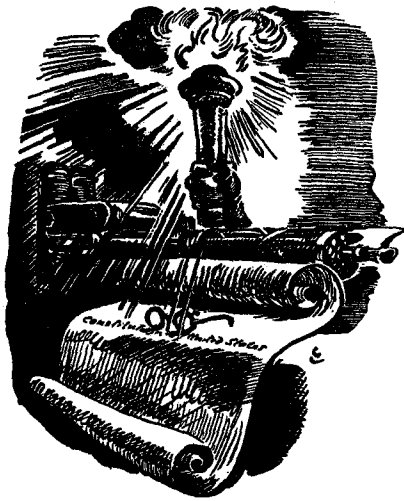
**T**ODAY THE GREAT MAJORITY of our businessmen have accustomed themselves to the change in the American social climate. This is apparent now in their ready adjustment to the new wage-and-hour legislation. Commissioner Andrews, who directs the application of this act, has a much pleasanter job in Washington than he anticipated.

Reform is an accomplished fact. Now let us have recovery. We have cleaned our national house of much malpractice and confusion. The stage is set for true co-operation of business with government and wholehearted national recovery. The new Secretary of Commerce has offered business more than an olive branch — his own earnest right hand. Let businessmen meet government more than halfway.

The signal for all of us is *all aboard for recovery*.

Henry Goddard Leach

# The Confused Liberal



by **STRUTHERS BURT**

**H**E WAS AN OLD FRIEND of mine, a successful businessman. We were having dinner together on a train and had been discussing the affairs of the world.

"But," he concluded — and suddenly I was uncomfortable for I knew what he was going to say — "don't mistake me. In a certain way I admire Hitler. Whatever you may think, he's done a grand job in Germany."

He paused and was a trifle hesitant. I suppose it had occurred to him that possibly Hitler hadn't done quite so good a job for the Czechs and humanity as a whole.

I looked out of the window at the dark and hurrying night. It didn't seem worth while to continue the discussion. I realized that within a month I had heard perhaps a dozen men say the same thing — nice fellows, successful, kind and honest Americans.

For a moment then I felt helpless and depressed.

And there was an odd and sinister coincidence. Invariably these men were of a type. In one breath, they admired a foreign dictator; in the next, they deprecated and dreaded all American attempts at reform and economic and social order — lest these bring dictatorship in their train. For years they had been crying aloud about individualism and personal initiative and now they were admiring Hitler. It didn't hang together. There was a bright and bloodless illogic about it that indicated at the

back of their minds an idea they did not dare formulate even to themselves.

America is by no means yet ready — and there is little chance that she will ever be — for the man who says frankly: "I do not care about human suffering; I do not care about the freedom of the mind; I do not care about injustice and brutality, so long as my dividends and influence remain."

And there is a further illogic and ignorance and stupidity. No man under a dictatorship is free, not even the *führer*. All men under a dictatorship are slaves to an idea fanatical and limiting, and no one suffers more than the upper classes and the businessmen. As is so often the case today, I felt myself in a world in which the standards of Alice in Wonderland had been accepted at their face value, in which black was white, and in which madness was invoked in the name of reason.

Presently my friend left me, and I went forward to the lounge car to smoke.

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**W**HATEVER ELSE was obvious in these dark and muddy times, it was clear that never since he had first emerged as a member of a respectable and accredited political system had the liberal, the democrat — the terms are synonymous — been more called on to assess himself and his beliefs, to rid himself of nonsense and the accretions of the decades, to get