



## The Competitive Spirit

SALMON bred from roe in fisheries have a rough time of it when released in tidal waters. The synthetic environment which eliminates danger also dulls the competitive instinct so necessary for survival in a cannibalistic world. The way of nature is rough and hard, whether it is hound against hare, falcon against dove, midge against elm, or crab grass against Kentucky blue.

Risk is the price of a day's adventure. Complete security is an obvious contradiction in terms, just as 100 per cent insurance against any danger or difficulty is as meaningless as it is unwarranted. Risk is an inherent quality in life, and with risk is the compensating impulse to survival which is competition.

For instance, thousands of business enterprises fail each year,

with financial loss to suppliers and personal loss to proprietors. Can commercial insolvency be prevented? Not entirely. Not in a competitive economy. The right to fail is just as inherent in free enterprise as the right to succeed. Commercial failure is part of the normal wear and tear on the machinery of production and distribution. However, risk implies caution, and caution comes with understanding and experience of the hazards of "going to market." Most commercial failures are personal failures caused by a mixture of overconfidence and undertraining for the responsibility.

For more than a century, Dun & Bradstreet has maintained commercial insolvency records, and although the rate of failure fluctuates with good times and bad, the reasons for failure are consistent. Most failures are due to controllable errors in the judgment of men, rather than "acts of God" in

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Mr. Sullivan is Editor of *Dun's Review and Modern Industry* in the March 1960 issue of which this editorial first appeared.

which man is a victim of accident or circumstance. Innovations in technology, styles, or marketing methods influence the trend of a business, and the real test of management skill and stamina often occurs during such shifts. The loss of capital in commercial failure is less significant than the loss in morale, because dollars are easier to recoup than faith in one's ability as an entrepreneur.

Some enterprises fail, recover confidence as well as capital, and start again. There are thousands of businessmen who have converted the stigma of bankruptcy to a wound stripe, and those who have paid their creditors in full have made it a badge of honor.

There can be no immunity from danger, whether in little, middle, or big business. Many fine textbooks have been written to guide the manager around hazards, but there are no infallible patterns for success, nor cure-alls for errors in

judgment. We learn to swim by swimming, and we learn best against the tide.

Mother Nature isn't sentimental about the welfare of her creatures. However, she has an instinct for checks and balances. She increases the speed of the timid, the resistance of the weak, the immunity of the sensitive, and the armor of the sluggish, but she never eliminates individual risk.

The business life is a spirited enterprise, and it offers exciting compensations. But daring must often outweigh caution where decisions must be made. The more we seek shelter, the more we invite mediocrity. There comes a time when we must face realities with the forthright understanding that we are on our own. No fighter ever won a championship punching a bag or shadow-boxing, and no businessman can succeed or survive without exposure to competition. ♦

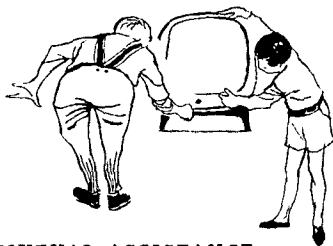
#### IDEAS ON LIBERTY

#### *Limited Government*

THE STATE is to abstain from all solicitude for the positive welfare of the citizens, and not to proceed a step further than is necessary for their mutual security and protection against foreign enemies; for with no other object should it impose restrictions on freedom.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT

# THE ULTIMATE FOREIGN AID



or—PUTTING MUSCLE IN MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

It was a foggy afternoon  
At story-telling time.  
Old Kaspar chewed a small cigar  
And sipped his rum-and-lime,  
While Peterkin and Wilhelmine  
Looked at the futurama screen.

They saw a sprawling foreign port,  
Where rows of Yankee ships  
Were anchored in the harbor pool  
Or mooring at the slips;  
While packed on piers or viewing stands  
Stood multitudes with open hands.

"Now tell us what it's all about!"  
Cried little Peterkin.  
"It's Mutual Assistance, Pete,"  
Said Kaspar with a grin.  
"We're sending folks the men and gear  
They need to build a New Frontier."

"What sort of gear," asked Wilhelmine,  
"Do all those people need?"  
"It's painted signs and sandwich boards,  
And tracts for them to read.  
It's padded socks and feather beds  
And bandages for broken heads."

"Now tell us all about the men  
We're sending with the gear!"  
"They're union bosses," Kaspar said,  
"Who raised the wages here.  
They'll teach the working men they meet  
The art of loafing in the street."

"But can we spare the services  
Of every union boss?"  
"In many ways," Old Kaspar smiled,  
"It's not a total loss.  
With foreign workers highly paid  
They'll not be needing further aid."



H. P. B. JENKINS

*Economist at Fayetteville, Arkansas*