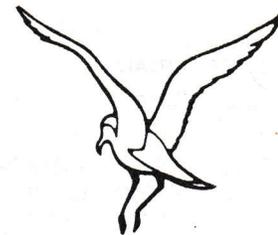


The Libertarian

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1978 IN REVIEW

One can look on the gloomy side of the past 12 months but it's much more rewarding to review some of the highlights, big and small. 1978 was a year for fighting back against big government. Taxation, regulation and incompetent bureaucracy reached levels such that the normally quiet man in the street was aroused. Vancouver hot line host Ed Murphy surprised everyone with the success of his "Legacy of Spending". The feds had been spending this country into the poor house and now we all knew it. The middle class was getting fed up, in Canada and in the U.S.

Vancouver typified this mood. In March, Rick Bolstler and Mike Little, Libertarian Foundation founders, spent three hours with Ed Murphy and his listeners talking radical libertarianism. Over 200 people were concerned enough to phone Rick and Mike at their hotel room following the show and both the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* carried news of the Foundation. Ideas on human liberty were becoming popular.

The big story of 1978, of course, was the tax revolt. California led the way with Proposition 13. Jarvis and Gann were the new heroes of the middle class of North America. People were not only fed up, they were pushing back. In spite of a strong campaign by the Three Bigs — government, labour and business — over 65% of the voters supported Proposition 13.

B.C. followed with a mini-revolt of its own. Over 1000 angry taxpayers turned out for a Surrey protest meeting called by local businessman Art Thornhill. And B.C. Conservative leader Vic Stephens spoke at the first meeting of HALT (Human Action to Limit Taxes) lining himself up with the new tax revolutionaries. Tax resistance came into existence in the eyes of the public.

October brought a by-election to Canada rather than a full blown one. A good thing for Trudeau or it would have been his "bye" election. The P.C.'s convincingly took 11 of the 15 seats. While not a victory for Libertarian purists, it did show that Canadians were ready for their government to take a different direction.

November was the month for American national and state elections. Dick Randolph of Fairbanks, Alaska became the first bonafide Libertarian to win a seat at the state level. Alaskans, at least, were contemplating radical political change.

There are many more stories of victory for freedom in 1978. They cannot all be told in one short editorial but one day we will look back at 1978 and remember it as a turning point, the year we said, "Enough!"

A FIT OF MORALITY

by Paul St. Pierre

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodic fits of morality. — Lord Macaulay.

Vancouver's fit of morality on the subject of prostitution has lasted more than a year now, souring the community spirit as it moves from stupidity to absurdity.

The latest episode involves the judiciary. Somebody says he saw a judge and a prostitute together. There is fear that one of them has violated the other. An investigation has begun. It could lead to the judge losing his job.

How's that for rousing a clatter from every tongue that is hinged at the middle and loose on both ends?

We may next expect to hear speculation about whether the meeting was carried out in the course of professional duties and, if so, whose. Did he really do to her what little boys write on fences?

All this in the wake of the Philliponi case and all the superb governmental and bureaucratic arrogance that went with it.

Using a large but unreliable old shotgun, the Crown fired scattershot at the Penthouse cabaret and those who run it. The court cases mostly involved prostitution, but one, a classic, brought the law down upon someone who had offered a bottle of whiskey to a liquor board member. Next we may expect to hear of businessmen being charged because they gave souvenir match books to government inspectors or offered them free sheets of Kleenex to wipe their noses.

After a long and expensive process — even more expensive to you and me than to those charged — all this has been tossed into the garbage can by higher courts.

This doesn't matter to the bureaucracy, which traditionally makes most of our effective law now and would prefer to make all of it. The bureaucrats don't want to restore the Penthouse licence.

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**THE LIBERTARIAN FOUNDATION:
PROGRESS REPORT**

High School Program

Work has been completed on a program to introduce high school students to Libertarian ideas. This program includes everything from an introductory questionnaire to be answered by students to a Foundation speaker's visit to a ten hour seminar on Libertarianism. The immediate task will be to solicit invitations to speak to high school classes on the philosophy of liberty. Interested students will then be invited to attend a two hour seminar which will cover the highlights of the libertarian philosophy. Any readers who know of teachers who would consider inviting a speaker to their class can pass this information on to the Foundation.

HALT

President Mike Little spent the week of November 12 in Ontario promoting HALT. The trip was a success, largely due to Al DeFreitas, founder of the Over-Taxed Citizens Association (OTCA) in Mississauga. DeFreitas gained prominence back in August when some 6000 Mississaugans sided with OTCA in a petition drive to protest outrageous property taxes. DeFreitas and Little were interviewed by

radio stations CHUM and CJMR as well as by the Mississauga Times and Mississauga News. Little's first meeting with DeFreitas went so smoothly that he agreed to bring OTCA into the HALT organization, making HALT Mississauga the first municipal HALT organization in Canada.

Little also made contact with a group from Peterborough, Ontario. The three people who spoke with him represented a local labour organization who had discussed HALT's Taxpayers' Charter at a recent meeting. Ironically, their main concern was that HALT might not be promoting the idea of cutting corporation taxes. It would seem that some labour groups, at least, are discovering that taxing corporations costs jobs. The answer to their concern was that the omission of corporate taxes was an oversight that will be corrected in the next printing.

President Little also attended the Libertarian Party of Canada Convention while in Toronto. There he had the opportunity to talk to many local libertarians about HALT and how they could promote libertarianism through a vehicle such as HALT.

While Little was away, HALT was visited by Mr. D.D. Cranfield from Saskatoon. Mr. Cranfield has been an outspoken critic of taxation and government meddling for years and recently joined HALT. He has been actively promoting HALT since joining, but has not formed an official HALT chapter in Saskatoon. HALT memberships from Saskatchewan are coming in regularly, thanks to his efforts.

DEATH & TAXES

"The art of taxation consists in so plucking the the goose as to obtain the largest amount of feathers with the least possible amount of hissing."
(Attributed to J.B. Colbert, 1619-1683, Louis XIV's Controller-General of Finance)

"What's that hissing I hear in California?"
— *the editor*

"To force a man to pay for the violation of his own liberty is indeed an additon of insult to injury. But that is exactly what the State is doing."
— *Benjamin R. Tucker*

"The inability of supporting a war is evident, unless it is intended to carry it on by fleecing the skin over people's ears by taxes."
— *Thomas Paine*



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DULLARDS & SENSE

by Bill Buckler, Jr.

This month's column is devoted to the CRTC (Canadian Roadblock to Communications). *

CRTC mandarins are annoyed at the "low" percentage of BCTV earnings which are spent to develop new Canadian productions. Charles Dalfen, CRTC vice-president, "would like to see it doubled or tripled". This is the same CRTC which forced BCTV to spend millions of dollars to develop re-broadcast stations in unprofitable areas such as the Kootenays. Millions of privately earned dollars, as opposed to the "public" funds from which the CBC and the CRTC help themselves so liberally every year.

Two perfectly serviceable English words — competition and monopoly — have been supplanted with shiny new bureaucratese at the recent CRTC hearings. Instead of competition, we now have the dreaded "fragmentation of the viewing audience"; instead of monopoly, we now have "cultural development". Now all you "fragmented" unfortunates out there can pull yourselves together only to be nauseated by such gems of "cultural development" as The Beachcombers and, horror of horrors, Canada After Dark.

CBC President Al Johnson has proposed that no more American channels be allowed on cable TV systems. Among his other proposals:

- that pay TV plans be shelved for 5 years until Canadian programming (read — the CBC) is in a "better competitive position".
- that private broadcasters be *ordered* to increase their Canadian content in prime time by 5% to 55%.
- that cable systems be *forced* to contribute to the costs of additional Canadian program services. Examples cited include (shudder) televised parliamentary debates and a proposed (shudder) second CBC-TV service.
- that fees paid for cable TV services should be considered as a source of funding for Canadian programs.

More from Mr. Johnson:

Al Johnson, CBC president, told the CRTC that The National, CBC's nightly 11:00 news program, will soon be broadcast at an earlier hour and will be expanded. According to Johnson, the reason for this is that "CBC surveys show that the viewing audience drops sharply after 11:00". I think you mean the CBC viewing audience, don't you Al? And I suppose CTV's news has nothing to do with it.

From Vaughn Palmer, Vancouver Sun writer:

FM 99 has been criticized for playing too much rock. Too much? Apparently so, according to a CRTC survey called the Radio Assessment Program (RAP). RAP hired 26 analysts to listen to tapes from FM stations and list the music played in peak periods by category. The breakdown was then compared to what the station had promised in its license application. FM 99 is committed to 40% rock, 6% country, 14% folk, 6% jazz, with the rest apportioned among the spoken word, "public affairs and advertising". I wonder what the rock percentage was? 41% maybe. The mind boggles !!

Nicole Parton, consumer columnist for the Province, called feminine hygiene ads "revolting" and said that they should be banned. She had 29,000 signatures to back her up. Parton requested of the CRTC, "that you redefine the question of what is and what is not tasteful". Tasteful? To whom, Ms. Parton? There is a very simple device built into every TV set which enables you to censor anything which you, personally, find distasteful. It's called the "off" button.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

CRTC member Ronald Irwin — "Maybe it is time we gave people more of what they need and less of what they want".

* with thanks to Mr. Alan Oas

OUR READERS INQUIRE

Dear Mr. Libertarian, Is there really a Santa Claus?

Virginia, that is a tricky question. For the first few years of life we are caught up with the idea of a chubby, benevolent man from the North who watches our every move and if we are good brings us lots of goodies at Christmas. But around 5 or 6 we start to lose our innocence and begin to question some of the untouchable myths surrounding this generous northerner. Going up and down chimneys, flying reindeer, little elves who make toys out of ice and snow. Really! Do you

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LET'S ABOLISH THE CRTC!

by *Walter Boytinck*

(What follows is an edited transcript of a submission made by Mr. Boytinck to the CRTC on January 25, 1977.)

Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen !

Starting with the idea that our chief concern should be to protect freedom of speech at all costs, I have become convinced that this freedom is being threatened and curtailed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

The ancient Charters of Liberties, particularly Magna Carta 1215, declared that people have certain rights, e.g. Trial by Jury instead of trial by Boards and Commissions, the right to private property, the right that no government will proceed with force against its citizens except upon the lawful judgement of a jury. Sir Edward Coke, the great English lawyer and Lord Chief Justice of England stated that even Parliament cannot abrogate these rights. Magna Carta 1215 further stated that citizens are entitled to resist government control when unlawful seizures of power have, as a direct objective, the establishment of absolute control over the people.

As an intervener in these hearings my interest is to further the complete freedom of radio and television. I speak in support of all applications before the Commission which increase the choice that I as a viewer and listener have.

It seems to me that the role of the CRTC and the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of the press granted in the Canadian Bill of Rights are mutually exclusive things — you can have either one, but not both together. I have concluded that if either free speech, free press or the CRTC ought to be curtailed, thoughtful men should cast their vote in favor of abolishing the powers of the CRTC.

I had been curious for years about what seemed to be an odd contradiction. Why was not the broadcasting industry — first radio, and then television — fully entitled to the same freedom traditionally secured for the newspapers? Why had we talked so grandly about the freedom of speech and the press and yet imposed a government agency such as the CRTC upon the broadcasting industry?

In times past, newspapers have risen up as one man to ward off any attempts to censor even the most dubious phases of publishing, such as smut books, horror comic books, subversive literature and other ghastly extremes. The principle has been that any attack on one part of pub-

lishing can set a precedent for eventual control of its other parts. This principle has even compelled editors to defend the rights of publications they actually detested.

Some people have advocated strong doses of government intervention as the remedy for what they thought to be wrong with radio and television. Their reason was that the "airwaves are public property; hence, broadcasting isn't free in the same sense that publishing is". There is also the argument that TV is a very powerful medium, and shouldn't be left in "private hands for private gain". But this is the very reason that broadcasting should be kept out of the hands of government. The first argument is the more critical one, for it is the one that is presented to the public. It is the fiction of the "public property" of the airwaves that gives government its strategic hold on the licensed broadcasting industry. Section 3 (a) of the Broadcasting Act declares that "radio frequencies are public property".

It appears that free speech has indeed been forced into a dilemma simply by physical limitation in the airwaves. And it remains an insoluble dilemma so long as one does not challenge the basic wisdom of "governmental ownership". I feel that this whole matter of "governmental ownership" should be challenged.

I have a few points to make — a few opinions to offer. They run contrary to most of what is said and heard about the plight of the broadcasting industry.

- (a) The revocable, renewable CRTC granted license has been an effective censorship device and will continue to be so regardless of who is serving on the Commission.
- (b) A better broadcasting industry, truly serving all segments of our Canadian society and offering a wide choice for viewers, can only come about through the abolition of government control.
- (c) The government should not "own" the airwaves.

The licensing system has always been a means of control, and the feudal governments of old quickly imposed licensing restrictions on the printing industry in its earliest days. The practice of licensing the press was not abandoned in England until 1694. Journalists like to point to the case of John Peter Zenger as one of the significant milestones in the battle for press freedom. In this famous case, back in the American colonial days of 1734, Zenger was prosecuted for publishing harsh criticisms of the governor of New York and his administration. Freedom finally won the day when a jury acquitted Zenger, whose plea was that what he had printed was true, and thus not libelous!

LET'S ABOLISH THE CRTC ! *(continued from page 4)*

With respect to freedom of the press, courts in the United States have held that licensing and censorship go hand-in-hand. As one American Judge has held: "A free press stands as one of the great interpreters between government and the people. To allow it to be fettered is to fetter ourselves". A free press goes hand-in-hand with a free country.

The result of our press freedom has been an unbelievable torrent of publishing covering every facet of life and thought. Much of it is bad, but much of it is also very good. The same laws that protect the publishing of frivolous comic books also guard the journals and books carrying the great ideas that test the foundations of society. To get the wheat, we endure the chaff, for nobody has shown us how to destroy the one and still preserve the other. Yet this freedom of the press and speech becomes beclouded when the issue of the airwaves or radio frequencies is discussed.

What are the broad powers of the CRTC? Section 3 (c) of the Broadcasting Act declares that the right to freedom of expression and the right to receive programs is unquestioned *but* these two rights are subject to statutes and regulations. Section 16 states some of the powers of the CRTC. These include the making of regulations regarding licenses, programs, time allocations, advertising, political programs, dramatization, network programs, license fees and such other matters as it deems necessary. Section 17 is even more dangerous because it gives the Commission the power to issue licenses, renew licenses and suspend licenses. All these powers are backed up by Section 29 under which fines can be levied of up to \$25,000 for a 1st offence and up to \$50,000 for a 2nd offence.

The net effect of the CRTC posture has been to place the industry in the position of always staying on the "safe side". Licensing is an unavoidable form of censorship. It is the old story: a federal agency given broad powers is actually forced to begin regulating and controlling in order to do its job properly. We do not insist on licensing of the press. It would be held to be censorship. If this be true in the case of publishing, it must also be true in the case of broadcast media.

Another point is that the government's pressure to dictate to the broadcasting industry can be expected to become increasingly bold in the future. We would do well to remember David Hume's wise observation: "It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once". Federal control of broadcasting is fully in accord with centralist thinking, as is control of everything else. Characteristically, the influential centralists at the public level presume themselves to be

men of good will who advocate their doctrines because they believe they are best. In their view, centralism is even the moral thing; "the public good versus private greed", "production for need rather than production for profit", "Canadian content rather than some other mix", are some of their choice sayings. Yet it is incumbent on those of us who value liberty to see clearly what must be the inevitable outcome; namely, more and more limitation on our freedom of speech.

We must also remember that many of the attacks on television have been the kind of attacks made right along at business organizations. They are simply one part of a massive campaign to thrust the government into every activity. The industry has been blasted for the proliferation of the commercials exhorting and cajoling people to buy things. The remark carries the subtle implication that it is wrong to try to persuade people to buy things, when in fact successful salesmanship has again and again been shown to be a necessary phase of the distribution function. Pointed references have been made to the industry's profits, but once again there was the implication that profits are wrong or have somehow been extorted from the public in an underhanded manner.

The attacks on programming are not unlike the fondness left-leaning writers have shown in recent years for attacking things like automobile tailfins. There seems to be a familiar sound in this idea of running "public service" programs rather than "popular" programs; isn't it a little like the notion that funds should be diverted from the private sector to the public sector? Once they have established their power, it is hard to break it for the cultural dictator is certain he is right. The egotism of these powerful boards or commissions is a frightful thing to behold.

The market is forcibly restrained by the CRTC and new ideas for increasing or varying broadcasting services are thwarted in the CRTC hearing rooms. In fact, the entire broadcasting industry has some of the characteristics of a government-protected cartel, with broadcasters accepting the inevitable market protection the exclusive license provides. The very advantages this system is supposed to achieve — the offering of fine high-level public service programs — has, in fact, been denied us.

The free market would have a tendency to serve all audiences. Yet it would be a sad day for the cause of liberty if the main remaining arguments favoring freedom become simply those showing it to be more efficient. The major issue involved here should be a free communications system versus a controlled one.

(continued on page 8)

rumblings

— by Jack H. Singer

Never on Sunday

A confrontation is brewing in B.C. over Sunday shopping. And the issue, which centres around the 60-year old Lord's Day Act, concerns the right of merchants, and ultimately consumers, to determine store closing hours.

The disagreement in Vancouver was precipitated when city hall decided to get tough with merchants and sent notices to stores open illegally Sundays.

City licence inspector Ken Armstrong said the notices went out after his department found 36 retailers doing business contrary to the store hours bylaw.

That was just the beginning.

"The bylaw is an arbitrary and capricious act and we intend to stay open and fight it all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary," said Harry Hammer, who was the first to openly challenge city hall.

Hammer, operator of three furniture outlets in Vancouver and Richmond, is particularly incensed that merchants in other municipalities such as Richmond are allowed to remain open Sundays. They are governed under the Municipal Act and not beholden to the city's ordinance.

"They are telling us we have to keep closed while the others stay open," said Hammer. We do 25 per cent of our annual volume on Sundays and the bylaw will cause irreparable damage to our business."

While Hammer considers the Lord's Day Act, which hasn't been enforced in five years, as valid as a "wart on a dead fly", he insists he is not arguing the merits of the legislation.

The city ordinance discriminates against us, said Hammer, and we say there should be an equal law for everybody . . . Why should Gastown be allowed to open Sundays? Just because it's an historic site? Our Homer Street building is older than Gastown.

Since Hammer indicated his intention to fight city hall, and indirectly the Lord's Day Act, other local merchants have joined the fray. And still others are quietly opening their doors Sunday, as a recent survey of Vancouver stores revealed.

Although there have been skirmishes before — such as that involving late shopping hours — the Sunday closing controversy is more closely related to a confrontation that took place twenty-five years ago when merchants and bureaucrats debated whether or not stores should be open after 1:00 pm. Wednesdays, or indeed all day Wednesday.

At that time, opponents argued that increased hours would add to the cost of doing business, thereby raising consumer prices, small merchants would be forced to work "overtime" and that such a policy would lead to

"anarchy", with merchants deciding when to open and close their place of business.

One columnist wrote: "This (Wednesday closing) law was enforced to protect the employees against some unscrupulous employers, who by devious means found ways to take advantage of their employees."

It is hardly surprising to find that the same anti-market arguments advanced in 1950 are once again being flogged.

The protectionists, who were as eager to prohibit competition as they were vociferous when they sense that it didn't exist, were right about one thing: given the right circumstances, even the validity of the Lord's Day Act would be questioned.

A major complaint against the Act is that it discriminates by permitting some stores to open but not others. This patent form of discrimination is particularly annoying to those merchants who do a large volume of business on Sunday. It would appear, then, that serving customers better is both reprehensible and anti-social.

It should be noted that other communities have had similar problems with legislation that, in the final analysis, encourages some individuals to profit at the expense of others.

The framers of Toronto's Retail Business Holidays Act were less concerned about being arbitrary than they were about regulating everything down to the last minute detail. But the end result was the same.

Under the Act, small grocery stores could open so long as they have no more than 2,400 square feet of selling area and no more than three employees. Pharmacies may open but with no more than four employees. Stores which close on Saturdays could also open but with no more than 5,000 square feet of space. Flower shops could open but pet shops must close.

Cries of "unfair" and "discrimination" followed closely behind the intricate, well-meaning but foolhardy legislation, purportedly designed to promote the commonweal. After considerable lobbying by merchants and others, it was recommended that Chinatown be designated a tourist area to permit Sunday opening of certain stores not previously covered by exemptions in the provincial statute. Private art galleries would be permitted to open; so would stores selling Chinese books, periodicals, tapes and records.

Although the pattern is obviously familiar, the ultimate losers are consumers — all of us — who must bear the brunt of reduced services, and in the long run, higher prices than the market would have allowed if unhampered.

The answer is simple, as a columnist for the *Globe & Mail* discovered when he pondered Toronto's malaise.

"Let the people decide where they want to shop, what they want to shop for, or whether they want to shop at all.

A FIT OF MORALITY (from page 1)

All the while, we have been treated to homilies from the mayor of Vancouver, who talks as if he were capable of abolishing commercial sex. No government of any time and place has managed that yet, but he persists. No doubt some people still listen. What is more entertaining than the discussion of whoring, particularly other people's ?

In the unlikely event that it interests the law, the bureaucracy or His Worship, might it be said that there are a lot of us out here who are weary of all this ?

Strange as it may seem, some of us do not care whether judges take their sexual pleasures with their wives, with their friends' wives, with free-floating girlfriends or with prostitutes.

Neither did it grieve us when there were one or more places in this town where prostitutes and customers could meet to bargain.

And if, when their normal places of rendezvous are closed by police harassment, they took to the streets, is it not a little hypocritical to express surprise when women who are not prostitutes are accosted by men who are stranger than they would normally prefer to meet ? Those encounters, which are embarrassing to both parties, have been invited by the dominant forces of this community who conducted the anti-prostitution campaign.

To ensure additional futility and injustice, there is now a campaign to convict men who solicit prostitutes. Apparently if one person, the prostitute, is to be harassed by bad law, the situation will become better if two people are harassed.

The whole silly business is based on the vast pretence that prostitution can be prohibited.

Those who enforce the law know perfectly well that prohibition is impossible. The real choice is not between prostitution and no prostitution but between controlled and uncontrolled prostitution.

The disadvantages of laws designed to prohibit prostitution are that they are expensive and unworkable. Those are two considerable failings. There is a third — that prostitution is a private affair and no business of the state's.

Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, the state of Nevada and a few others have been honest enough to declare prostitution legal. The Canadian impulse to hypocrisy doubtless is still too strong to permit that here.

But, short of that happy day when governments learn to confine themselves to government affairs, might we not in this city re-establish some tacit and workable evasions of the law ? It may be dishonest, but it is a system that worked adequately for a long time.

Brothels could operate in a couple of selected areas of Vancouver. If any quiet direction were offered by authorities, the prostitutes, madams and pimps would be quick to cooperate. They prefer orderly business as much as any other entrepreneurs.

Some communities for many years operated a system based upon regular police raids, duly announced in advance. At these selected intervals, prostitutes paid fines in lieu of civic licence fees and the medical authorities examined them for venereal disease.

As for the evils which we are told grow up around the institution of prostitution, they must be already here, since the trade has always existed here. The grosser ones, such as child prostitution or forms of what is called white slavery, can be prevented by vigorous enforcement of other laws. A law which interferes with the process of willing buyer and willing seller of sexual favors is not central to the protection of such people.

Some of us would be grateful if the whole matter could be quietly returned to the obscurity it so richly deserves.

Mr. St. Pierre is a columnist for the Vancouver Sun. We thank him for his kind permission to reprint this column which appeared October 28, 1978.

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LET'S ABOLISH THE CRTC ! (continued from page 5)

Improving broadcasting ought to mean the creation of conditions which will allow the emergence of stations and programs which will serve the millions who are supposed to have been ignored when TV networks developed shows for the lowest common denominator. A characteristic of the free market is that "demand" seeks to bring "supply" into existence, if the thing is at all possible. As we look about at all other industries, we can easily see that all businesses offer tremendous quantities of standardized low-cost products for the mass market; yet this has not done away with unusual or special product lines for those who want them. Supermarkets have not destroyed the quality delicatessen stores, and mass-produced low-cost housing has not ruined the quality housing market. If there is a market for different kinds of television programming, the programming will find a way to appear.

The experience of television in Britain is interesting proof that increased competition improved the programming. For almost all its existence British broadcasting has been a government monopoly. This has been fought bitterly through the years, and it was proved that many British listeners tuned in on livelier broadcasts from the European continent — for the British Broadcasting Company was terribly dull. Finally, under mounting pressure, the government allowed one commercial TV network to begin broadcasting in 1955. The result: the coming of a rival forced the BBC to begin competing for audiences by using the same type of program fare. Viewers suddenly took to television as they never had before.

Yet this was only competition of a very limited kind. We have no way of determining what an uncontrolled television industry would be like. We can only point to the rest of the economy — particularly the freest portions of it — and say that something very fine would happen.

to be continued next month

Our Readers Inquire (from page 3)

take us for children? No, the whole story about a man who bestows wealth upon the world once a year defies all laws of physics, economics and just plain common sense. Santa Claus simply couldn't exist.

But I said this was a tricky question. And it is. It seems when people reach the age of majority and can vote, they once again believe in Santa Claus. But feeling sophisticated far beyond their intellectual growth, which stopped at age 5 or 6, they want a sophisticated Santa. And one who brings sophisticated gifts. No fire engines please! So they play a game called "government".

Some of their peers, whose intellectual growth stopped at age 2 or 3, get together every 4 or 5 years and promise the other game players as many free and outlandish gifts as possible. Then the people vote for the person promising the most believable gifts. The socialist Santa seldom wins because of his tendency to go overboard with his promises. The conservative Santa seldom wins because of his inherent stinginess. The liberal Santa always wins because his promises are just right, and perhaps because his colour reminds us all of the pretty suit our earlier Santa wore.

Now just why, Virginia, grown men and women believe that anyone can deliver something for nothing escapes us. But they do. Perhaps they wish to return to life at age 5 when everything was provided free by their parents or by Santa. Perhaps they think that we can all become better off by picking each others pockets (perhaps they think no one will pick their pocket). Whatever their thinking is, they are quickly finding out the first law of economics: nothing can be given away which is not first produced. And slowly, but with definite certainty, they are coming to realize that they are the ones who did the producing all along. Those three wise men from the East, Joe, Pierre and Ed, are not Santas at all. They are only glorified tax collectors caught up in a year-long Christmas spirit — with your money and mine. Soon all of us who have reached childhood's end will come to our senses and dismiss our elderly Santa Clauses. Then we can restore the spirit of Santa to our children and get on with living our lives in a world that requires that all of us look after ourselves.

— Rick Bolstler

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