

It Strikes Me ☹ ☹ ☹ By C. O. Steele

SOME MONTHS AGO, in Quebec, a man who said that Germany "may win the war" was found guilty of violating the Defense of Canada Regulations. His utterance was construed as tending to impair the war effort, and he was fined \$20.

A little earlier, in one of our own courts, a member of that strange sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses was convicted of disorderly conduct for having said, "Religion is the greatest racket on the face of the earth."

The two events make one wonder whether we are fighting for freedom of speech or merely freedom of such speech as happens to agree with our own sentiments. Henry George believed that individual freedom should be limited only by consideration for the equal rights of others. These court decisions would seem to have stopped considerably short of that ideal.

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TECHNOCRACY, advocate of a planned economy and the abolition of the price system, is rearing its ugly head again. One of the evils of the poisonous thing is the way it provokes well meaning people to acts of doggerel. I am one of those strong silent men myself, not given to sudden outbursts and usually capable of exercising a good measure of self control. But an irresistible impulse hit me as I sat reading about Technocracy, and before I could regain my composure this dreadful thing had been perpetrated:

According to the Technocrats

The time's not far away,
When all we'll have to do to live
Is work four hours a day.
To others this may be good news;
It leaves me rather cold;
For I'm a district leader
In the Democratic fold.

For party zeal and loyalty,
I'll soon have my deserts;
A well paid, cushy sinecure.
Four hours a day? Aw nerts!
The technocratic promises
On me unheeded fall;
An office holding Democrat
Won't have to work at all!

As to making a living by working four hours a day, the Technocrats, of course, are right. In a sane world that should be easily possible. When it is realized that in the past one hundred years man's ability to produce wealth has increased many, many times over, it should be apparent that one could live much better today on four hours work than on fourteen hours a century ago. Provided, that is, that one is permitted to work and is allowed to retain the fruits of his own labor.

In its other aspects, Technocracy is nothing but a shoddy imitation of fascism. As such it is no more acceptable to followers of Henry George than is its shabby counterpart, the political doctrine of envy known as communism.

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OUT OF THIS CRAZY WAR a slight measure of sanity with respect to tariffs seems to be emerging. In the Economic Pact recently signed by Britain and the United States, the two signatories pledge themselves to measures looking to the "expansion . . . of production, employment and the exchange and consumption of goods . . . to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers."

The pronouncement will come as a shock to that small group of people who believe that we can live happily and prosperously in economic isolation, without any foreign trade whatever. It will also be a jolt to those who recognize our need of exports but believe that it is possible to make foreign trade a one-way process; possible to sell abroad without buying there; possible to collect payment for our goods without taking other people's goods in fair exchange.

And it will certainly be upsetting to the president of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, who wailed bitterly when the reciprocal trade treaties were being negotiated a couple of years ago—how long ago that all seems now—that "Secretary Hull will not admit that this country, because of its relatively higher standard of living, needs protection to a far greater degree than any other nation in the world."

To persons with a smattering of economics, the promise in the Economic Pact will be one of the most hopeful signs that has appeared on the international horizon in many a moon.