

# Freeman Views the News

## The Politics of Poverty

The recently enacted Hatch bill was hailed as an attempt to remove the temptation to use government largesse from the realm of politics. In reality what the law has done is to shift the power of using relief money for political purposes from national to local politicians.

Which brings to the fore again the fact that an army of unemployed always will be used by politicians to advance their own ends, and that so long as this army exists democratic government is threatened. There is no legal method for offsetting the impulse of gratitude. A benefactor, even a Robin Hood, is always appreciated. That is the truth that Tammany Hall politicians discovered and fattened on many years ago. And if the only way that the recipient of a ton of coal, a job or a food stamp can show his appreciation is merely to cast a vote, it will be the object of every politician to point out to the grateful voter that the gift is the result of his, not his opponent's, efforts. This always will be of great advantage to the "ins."

No law ever can be devised to prevent pressure groups from using the State to advance their ends. For the State is an organization of organizations determined to gain ends by power politics rather than by production. The American Legion, the National Association of Manufacturers, the labor unions, the tariff-protected interests, the real estate boards—all such pressure groups have for their primary purpose the getting of special privileges; which means that they propose through legislative methods to secure for themselves advantages that unorganized groups do not have. They are organized to get something for nothing, and the State is their instrument.

The Poverty Pressure Group is as yet unorganized, although attempts along these lines are in the making. Since this group is so large, and

probably will become larger, because our national economy is based on privilege rather than on production, the self-interest of politicians will see to it that this block of votes will not remain undirected. The P. P. G. is made cohesive by the most powerful of human impulses—the desire to live. To it the right of suffrage is quite secondary, and of value only as a means for getting sustenance in a world that denies the opportunity to work for a livelihood.

Thus the vote becomes an economic rather than a political instrument. Its market value always will be properly assessed by politicians.

## Will They Ever Learn?

The press, the radio and to some extent the movies have labored for years and years to hammer home in the American mind the truth that we all pay taxes, whether we see them or not.

Then, after all this labor, Dr. George Gallup polls his famous cross section of Americans on the question: "Do you pay any taxes?" ... and 25% of those who answer say "No." That's one person in every four. Most of these persons who think they don't pay any taxes are in the lower-income group—earn less than \$20 a week.