

# Freeman Views the News

## "Relief" is Impossible

In 1933, when our well-intentioned but economically ignorant brain-trusters installed "relief," we were told that this policy would be temporary. Nay, we were told that it was a measure made necessary by the imminence of "revolution." The latter statement, made by innuendo, is just another illustration of the use of force majeure for political ends. More on this point later.

That "relief" was not, could not, be a temporary measure, but springs from a deep-rooted economic maladjustment, is attested by the recently published study of the National Economy League. In seven years Federal, State and local governments have spent about \$20,500,000,000 on "relief." The end is not nearly in sight, for we have spent more in the seventh year than in any of the previous six years. Twenty-two million persons, about one-sixth of our population, are today receiving relief payments in one form or another. And this does not include the half billion dollars paid out in unemployment insurance since January 1938.

An interesting item in the study is that the overhead costs of administration of "relief" have risen from ten to twenty five percent of the total. In 1938 more than a billion dollars was spent on the cost of spending. Thus, bureaucracy feeds not only on the producer who pays, but also on the hungry it is supposed to feed. Quite characteristic.

The very definite impression a logical mind gets from the study is that "relief" has not relieved, that—judging by the promise of its instigators that it was a way of spending ourselves out of "relief"—it is an absolute failure. Does the League suggest that it should be abolished? Hardly. It merely suggests that our "relief" program is too haphazard, that it should be coordinated, that cooperation between Federal and State agencies is necessary.

The only way to abolish "relief" is to abolish it—in toto, and at once. Also, its underlying economic fallacy—"scarcity economy"—must be abandoned, because it is a fraud. This fraudulent theory is based upon the crazy idea that people get satisfactions through higher values, whereas the evident fact is that only through production, and lower values, are human desires gratified. More things, lower prices—not less things, higher prices. Let people go to work and make more things. Let us have an abundance of everything—and let those who produce it keep it. That means, of course, let's kick the land speculators off the earth, the only place where produc-

tion can begin.

Which brings us to the dire fear of "revolution" which in 1933 we were confidentially told would result if "relief" were not started. The fact is that everything we have done—in Federal as well as in State governments, and regardless of party—has tended to hold up land values, to retard the necessary wiping out of speculative values.

The only "revolution" that would have followed from a complete deflation of land values would have been a legislative struggle by the land hogs to safeguard their rent privilege. That's the only "revolution" that was avoided—by "relief."