

## Laws! Laws! Laws!

To the Editor:

Joe Doaks was walking down the street, head high, spirits glowing, and strictly minding his own business. A stranger, walking faster, passed him, suddenly turned, hit Joe in the eye, smashed his nose, drove one hard to the stomach, and dropped Joe for the full count with an incisive upper-cut.

The stranger relaxed, smoothed his clothes, started to leave, turned, looked at Joe on the sidewalk, and yelled out: "Help! Help! There's a man hurt." He rushed into the drugstore for bandages, into the meat shop for a bit of steak for Joe's swollen and blackened eye, and into the restaurant for a pan of cold water. Rushing out, he started a complete first-aid program on his victim.

By this time Joe had recovered from shock enough to recognize the man who was helping him was the same one who had assaulted him. Joe blurted out: "Listen, you! If you had not done so much to me you would not have to be so darn busy now doing so much for me."

And so with our dear, loving, charitable government. If this "thing"—we call it government—had not, in years gone by, done so much to hurt the people, it, the dear thing, would not now be trying to do so much to help the people.

Laws! laws! laws! Single laws, groups of laws—mostly bad laws—damage the people in their efforts to get a living, maintain health, retain individual dignity and spirit. Seeing the results of bad laws, ignoring the bad laws which caused such bad results in the first place, "do-gooders" busy themselves drafting laws to mitigate the symptoms caused by other laws which are still on the books pouring out their poisons.

I can't help but wonder how the gangs that succeeded in getting the bad laws passed in the first place like the efforts of the "do-gooders" to pass another bunch of bad laws trying to salve and bandage the evils caused by the first set?

NOAH D. ALPER.

818 Olive.

## Laws That Tempt

EDITOR STAR-TIMES: There are millions of times daily a prayer that we be not led into temptation. The basic temptations which exist under any social system, in all races of people, are something in themselves to resist. But not satisfied with this, we do our utmost to compound them, and the 10 commandments of moral goodness are strained to the utmost.

One of the most natural of human actions is to trade, both at home and abroad. While trade in things of dangerous nature should naturally be curbed, this sort of prohibition need not apply to trading with foreigners for woollens, machines, raw materials, etc. Yet we pass a law. We say these most natural ways of seeking to satisfy our wants are not to be engaged in. The state, in these respects bridled to leading strings of special interests, says we must not. It uses the commandment form, not in matters immoral, but in matters most moral and good. And people cannot see that it is wrong to bring something into our country which they saw

in foreign countries. But the tariff-tax law says you must not or, if you do, you must pay. The law is wrong, but it must be made to appear that "people are wrong." Lead us not into temptation? Why pass wrong laws?

See the scandals which flow from income and sales tax evasions! Lead us not into temptation? Why do we erect an artificial structure of tempting situations to work against all precepts of good and honesty; of wanting to "go straight"? Is it any wonder the church seems to fail?

NOAH D. ALPER.

## Beyond 'Fair Trade'

EDITOR STAR-TIMES: The Supreme Court pulled the right plug, and down the drain went the "fair trade" practices acts of 45 states. The arthritic condition of American free enterprise is a bit relieved by this action, but only a little bit relieved.

We have economic arthritis. Every joint and junction of production and exchange is coated with the stuff—with free-enterprise boosters seeking something for No. 1. The wolf pack of Americans who have confused getting wealth and services with making wealth and services, and the gangs of good-hearted people who have confused tax-supported and forced charity for justice have placed impossible burdens on our freedom-way economy.

One need not wonder what happens next. The leadership that favors less arthritic pain in the economy—that is, favors vocal freedom of economy—by seeking more of what causes economic arthritis, will now hire the "constitutional" lawyers to write a law that will stick. They won't think they are wrong; they will think the only trouble is wrong methods. They call themselves practical.

From their viewpoint and, by a one-foot measurement, maybe they are. From the view of society they and other practical men, so-called, lead us to economic and social destruction. "Where there is no vision the people perish." We are very sick.

NOAH D. ALPER.

## Cure for Skyline Gaps?

A 75-year-old by-product of the "single tax" theory of taxation is bobbing up again, which could be of interest to St. Louis as a means of arresting downtown blight.

Believed originally proposed by Henry George, nineteenth century political economist, the plan calls for graded taxes on land within municipalities; highest on unimproved property and progressively lower on improved land. Taxes on machinery are eliminated. Advocates claim it discourages speculation in vacant real estate and stimulates sharply building and industrial operations.

Latest torch-bearer is John C. Lincoln of New York, a retired businessman who published as a hobby, and at his own expense, a monthly business letter. The Henry George School of Social Science has for many years, however, maintained branches in principal cities offering free courses in fundamental economics. One of its tenets is the justice of the graded tax, and Lincoln maintains that the city of Pittsburgh's application of it since 1913 has stimulated building spectacularly. For example permits issued during the transition period there were 52 per cent greater than those of St. Louis, 66 per cent over Philadelphia and Cleveland, and 238 per cent over Baltimore. Pittsburgh's tax rate on land values is \$28 per \$1000, against \$14 on buildings.

To those who deplore the increasing gaps in the St. Louis skyline as more and more structures are razed to decrease taxes, Lincoln's revival of the Henry George theory may offer considerable appeal.

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## INFORMATION NEEDED

TO THE EDITOR:

"The Great Need—An Informed Opinion" (April 9) by Lester Markel most interestingly highlights the area of international affairs upon which the people desperately need information. Once again we are in the process of making decisions. Right or wrong, sooner or later, they will be made by the people, or thrust upon them by the bursting pressure of events.

But if, after many decades of education and propaganda, the American people cannot solve the internal problems of taxation, tariffs and labor-capital relations, how can we hope to achieve right opinion on the vastly more complicated problems of economic and political international relations? \* \* \* More desperately than we need an "informed opinion" on external affairs, we need it on internal affairs. Can it be that the knowledge which should reach the people does not exist, or is it under a "taboo"? NOAH D. ALPER.

New York.

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