

## A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

The business community of the nation has of late been undergoing a very interesting evolution.

Before 1929, business was just business. Production—and speculation—took place according to the way things went, and that was all there was to it.

After the stunning blow of the Great Depression came the New Deal. During a dozen or so years of mounting taxes and controls there was much grumbling among business men, quieted down for a while by fat war contracts.

But after the war, with repeated "mandates from the people" for more deals of social security, pensions, unemployment insurance, excess profit taxes and what-not, business began beating its breast. "If all this is what the people want," said industrial leaders, "it is *our* job to see that they get it." And with one hand they made brave efforts to supply the new commodity in demand—security—while with the other hand they made equally brave efforts to create a demand for a commodity that had fallen into ill repute—free enterprise. Full-page ads, comic books, leaflets, movies, lectures about "the American way" poured forth.

But the impact sought was not in evidence. Business continued to flagellate itself. "We have failed. Where?"

One of the most recent of these Dostoyevskian examinations appeared in the September issue of *Fortune* Magazine. The article concludes: "For the businessman, in short, there is a hell of a job ahead."

Why this tremendous load for the businessman? The spur to better production, more participation with employees, more sensitivity to "the voice of the people," is all to the good. But is it not a little *de trop* to place on these practices the entire burden of the fate of civilization?

If production were just production, wouldn't these good things come about naturally? And there's the rub. Production is not just production. Business is already loaded, not just with a responsibility, but with basic economic maladjustments. And the most basic of these are land monopoly, land speculation and the private collection of land rent, which work their paralysis on the business structure.

One opportunity presents itself—while the business community is in its current fever perhaps it is ripe for this truth.