

A Word With You

THE President's Commission on National Goals for the 1960's came up with a miscellaneous bundle of proposals, hopes, prognostications and wishful thinking. With all its fence-straddling, the thread that ran throughout the report was the anticipation of more and more federal spending and activity—in education, science, health and welfare—and in buying land for urban renewal, thus subsidizing land speculators.

So there's the official line. Nothing really is disturbed, nothing challenged. All the "correct" things were advocated—and the end result is as barren, lifeless and unresponsive to the people's aspirations as the state religion of ancient Rome.

After all, what could be expected of such a commission? When there really is a "national purpose," the people don't have to be told.

Another contemporary parody of a purpose is competition with the USSR. "How can anyone say that we have no national purpose?" exclaimed one prominent worthy. "We have a fight to win and that is to beat Russia in productivity." One wonders why we should churn out no end of stuff just to beat Russia at the game. Suppose they should wind up with a few extra gadgets in the final count, do they win? Has freedom no worth of its own?

Much of our official promotion of culture tries to make it look like a

grass roots movement. There is, for instance, the huge Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts being erected in New York. Again, land speculators have been subsidized with public money in this project, and while we are being bamboozled, we incessantly hear that it is "our" dream that is being realized. There was something more honest about the cultural centers built with the loot of rich patrons, from Renaissance princes to industrial barons. No one was fooled about the financial arrangements, and an art was promoted that common people could understand and love. Now that it's all very "democratic," the arts that are officially sponsored are incomprehensible and repugnant to the mass of people.

In short, some sort of schism has developed between officialdom and the populace. Officials usually try to "keep the party going" long after the life has gone out of it—and while the life may not have been completely knocked out of our real and natural national purpose, it suffered a serious blow when our frontier vanished, when the best of our land was gobbled up by vested interests. In the era when every American could stand on his own feet on his own land, no one was needed to preach "national purpose."

Jefferson! thou should'st be living at this hour—America hath need of thee!

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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