

A Word With You

WHEN the Navy's attempted launching of its earth satellite, Vanguard, failed for the second time—also the Air Force's Atlas—naturally, there was widespread disappointment. But it wasn't a helpless and bewildered disappointment. There were reasons for this failure. Perhaps the average layman didn't know all the ins and outs of it, but he had no doubt that the experts would seek out the trouble, find it, correct it, and that the matter could be explained to the public in understandable terms.

Contrast this situation with the current business recession and the talk about it. As soon as Vanguard started to go off course, there was already some idea as to what was wrong. But as our economy started to go out of whack last year, our experts had no idea of what was happening or why. Seasonal slack? Inventory readjustment? An upturn in January? June? Election Day? And what to do about it? Lower interest rates? Raise them? Lower taxes? Raise them? Fiddle around with the "built-in controls"? Oh well, there's always a public works program that can be thrown in.

Articles and lectures explain the wizardry of rocketry—the latest and most technical of man's achievements—in terms that children (and even adults) can understand. By contrast, the business cycle that has been with us again and again and again is discoursed upon in sheer double-talk—the reason for the frabjous frammiss is the ipswich on the amscray—you know, you've heard it.

Why doesn't a clear, precise, logical explanation that can be tested against the facts all along the line—the Georgist explanation of land speculation—get at least as much of a hearing as the frabjous frammiss?

It's hard to say. Dr. Karl Menninger of Topeka, Kansas, in a recent Library Journal issued by the Menninger Foundation, quoted from a letter evidently written by a Georgist, referring to its contents as, "what every economist knows to be true and no one will advocate." The letter stated that taxing land values and untaxing buildings would be the most effective way to encourage improvements. This seems indisputable—why, then, will none advocate it? Instead, when it is pointed out, we get the frabjous frammiss treatment.

The sociologist Sidney Armor Reeve said that one of the laws of society is that people would rather suffer untold agonies than think; and that people don't change their ways unless absolutely forced to.

If this melancholy law be true, we will need something worse than 1929 to get across the need for the simple natural solution; because even that catastrophe didn't do it.

But maybe things aren't quite that hopeless. It took only the launching of an earth satellite by our rival, the U.S.S.R., to galvanize our nation into a great new effort, to make an about-face on the role of the scientist and "egghead" in society, and to practically revolutionize our educational system.

Who knows what event may be around the corner to force people's attention to the George way—the natural way—the right way?

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