

Freedom at a Price

OUR first salute in 1959 goes to Dorothy Thompson for an article entitled "Can it Be a Crime to be Free?" and to Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Gould, editors of the *Ladies Home Journal* who published it in the December issue.

Estimating that less than ten per cent of our population is engaged in agriculture, Miss Thompson points out that ninety per cent of us do not know that "it has become a crime for a man to insist that he is able to support his wife and family without the aid of the American taxpayers, claiming only the primary human right to be let alone to work out his own destiny, taking his own risks and bearing his own responsibilities."

The article concerns Stanley Yankus, Jr., a Michigan farmer who raises chickens. Since the price of feed is supported at such a high level that it has been priced out of every market, including the American market, this farmer decided to raise his own feed. Here he came into conflict with the soil bank program because he had an allotment of only 12 acres — and only those with an allotment of 15 acres or more were allowed to vote on the original measure. The ASC was therefore put over by farmers owning corporation farms — sometimes representing city syndicates, absentee owners or tax-exempt cooperatives. This system, as the author shows, tends to monopoly with a strong resemblance to collective farms.

Stanley Yankus framed the Declaration of Independence and hung it on his living room wall. He still believes in it, but in another year he may be bankrupt as a result of his insistence on what has heretofore been considered

every American's birthright. Half of his bank account has been seized and his fines have totaled nearly \$5,000.

It is not necessarily true that all self-sufficient, liberty-loving people live on farms, however. Joseph L. Richards of Harvard, Massachusetts, wrote of "another rebel against tyranny" and says "it is too bad he did not drift into a class at the Boston extension of the Henry George School before he made up his mind to lose so much of his exchangeable resource."

This 70-year-old rebel is William F. Bowes, and he is referred to as a "counterpart of Connecticut's famous tax rebel, Miss Vivian Kellems." He is a retired employee of the Metropolitan District Commission and has refused to take more than \$18,000 in back pay and pension money from the state because the withholding tax has been deducted. His pay and retirement checks dating back to October 1, 1943 totaling \$13,635.97 have not been cashed. He has also refused to withdraw \$4,888.98 to which he is entitled, representing his own contributions plus interest from the State Retirement Fund. We are including Mr. Bowes in our rousing 1959 salute.

The president of the Henry George Foundation, Charles R. Eckert, was much concerned about the state of this "monopolized, subsidized, tax-ridden and debt-burdened republic" in his recent address at the conference in Pittsburgh. This is the way he summed it up: "Today free institutions are being tested as never before. There is no body of men and women so well qualified to teach and lead in the reforms that will restore the dream of the founding fathers to its pristine glory, as are the Georgists."