

## *Freedom of the Press Is Defendable—Sometimes in Ways that Are Quaint*

By DOROTHY WORRELL

**W**E do not like our liberty to be interfered with. If we disagree with the constituted authorities as to where our freedom ends, we are willing to fight the issue out soberly and rationally through the proper channels — the courts, if need be.

When Mary Cain of Summit, Mississippi took the position that social security is illegal and refused to pay the tax on herself as a self-employed person, she was acting out her individual freedom. If the taxing authority thought her wrong, and she persisted in her stand, the matter would need settling in a legal manner.

It may be that the federal agents did not wait for an orderly decision, or decided to take the law into their own hands, or were so sure they were right that they considered the affair concluded. In any case, according to the news dispatch, they went to Mrs. Cain's place of business and closed it with a padlock.

### *Many Kinds of Padlocks*

It appears to us that any red-blooded American would do what Mrs. Cain did when she found her business door padlocked. She sawed it off and entered the premises to do business as usual. In fact, what other course could she have pursued, now that we come to think of it? To make a legal appeal would involve so long a process that her business would suffer possibly irreparable harm.

On careful consideration it would seem that the federal agent committed an unnecessary hardship upon Mrs. Cain, business woman, in padlocking her establishment. He also marred his effectiveness and that of his superiors by performing a questionable act, questionable legally and certainly questionable as to effect.

All parties had best fight this thing out in the courts—not only the tax matter itself, but also the padlocking. Let's find out where right and wrong, legally speaking, lie. And let's have an end to this padlocking of business and a real decision on the legality of the tax deduction. Mrs. Cain made a point of the fact that her business is publishing a newspaper, and that the government agent by his act of padlocking was in effect trying to muzzle the press. That makes two counts against the agent: nullifying freedom of the press and interfering with a person's private business. Bad enough on either score. Yes, let's fight it out.

To a Georgist, of course, the time cannot come too soon when the people will see taxes for what they are and abolish them, collecting full ground rent in their stead. And is it not an apt commentary on this disagreement between the federal tax authorities and Mrs. Cain to say that taxation, being wrong, does inevitably cause confusion? Oh, the simplicity of the ground rent plan for revenue! Would that it were understood and established!

**Dorothy Worrell, a former newspaper editor, lives in Centerville, Massachusetts. Once when the state was about to take, by eminent domain, for a new road, a piece of land in which she was interested, the surveyor went through and drove stakes to mark out what they intended to take. Miss Worrell, having received no official notification, went out afterwards with an axe and knocked them down. She then wrote to state headquarters and an engineer called on her very apologetically.**