

MAR. 2 1976

# Big Government Poor Alternative

**N**OTE how much the critics of big business sound like the boosters of big government. They could be the same people speaking.

The clamor for breaking up major corporations and turning management over to government bureaus is heard in various tones. The underlying theme is authoritarian, centralized government and the end of free enterprise.

We have good reason to be proud and happy with our free enterprise system, but this satisfaction is under attack. A statement published by The Business Roundtable, national organization to inform the public concerning our economic system, charges that "a vocal group of economists, social reformers, consumer advocates and other self-proclaimed critics are trying to convince us that our system is evil, that we should feel guilty about the way we live."

Anthony H. Harrigan, executive vice president of the United States Industrial Council, Nashville, writes: "We are in danger of losing the historic American system of government involving local control and responsibility and respect for private property and individual rights. Today, bureaucratic power is destroying individual rights and crippling private enterprise."

Business leaders are becoming gloomy about prospects for stopping it. Richard A. Riley, president of Firestone, said: "It's time to admit the free enterprise system is dead. The nation now operates under a controlled enterprise system and unless (government regulation) comes to a halt soon, we will have to eliminate the word enterprise."

Those who favor turning operation of major industries and businesses to centralized government are not hampered by obvious facts, such as failures of socialism in other countries and the poor management record of our own government in the postal service and Amtrak.

For example, Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., recently gave these spurious arguments for breaking up big oil companies: "One is that a product so central to the economy of this country and the world should not be controlled by just a handful of people, as I think it now is. Second, it would permit the government to get

out of the price-control and price-regulation business."

Free enterprise has been defined as a system based upon the assumption that a quality product will be produced at a fair price, and everyone involved, from producers of raw materials to consumers, will benefit from its production, sale and use. Other economic systems use force, fear, threats and intimidation to compel individuals to work, but in a free system, the incentive to produce is a share of the profits in proportion

to contributions made.

This inducement has spurred Americans to great creativeness and inventiveness, competitive production and higher living standards. Demands that we change our system do not come from the vast majority of those who have worked their way to success. They come mainly from those who want to share the best fruits of labor without earning them and from those who may expect to gain positions of power through political upheaval.