

# Trust Is Key to Con Man's Entrance

A STORY is told of a judge who asked a confidence man being tried for fraud: "How in the world could you be so mean as to cheat widows and orphans, who trusted you, out of their money?"

The "con man" responded: "Well, judge, there's no way you can get their money if they don't trust you!"

It's a reflection on the human race to say it, but it looks like everybody ought to become a little more suspicious of his fellow man. Those we trust may be out to cheat us.

Reports of promoters who persuaded people to go into the earthworm and wholesale plant production businesses are examples of how savings may be lost and debts accumulated.

Some people have made money growing earthworms, but when too many try it, the limited market may be glutted. Those who sold them equipment and supplies are elsewhere, leaving investors to wonder how to convert worm boxes to profitable uses.

Likewise, those who visualized a growing source of greenbacks from

backyard greenhouses may feel like greenhorns. They trusted greenhouse salesmen who agreed to buy their plants, but when the plants were ready to sell, the "buyers" were gone.

One might feel less sympathy for the victim of the old counterfeit machine scheme. His money was changed, all right, but not as he expected. Instead of his genuine \$100 bills multiplying into phony \$100 bills, he had a stack of \$1 bills.

These and many similar schemes are old. They have been used many times and results well-publicized. Yet, there always seems to be someone who has enough charm, personality and charisma to generate trust to make them work again.

The list of confidence games in which investors nearly always lose is long, but information about them is available. Many of them are just variations on the same old themes.

Confidence men usually check to determine the resources of their intended victims. The latter seldom bother to check up on the charming strangers with the hip-pocket, get-

rich schemes.

Success of a confidence game depends upon the victim's greed and gullibility, which will allow him to overlook questions he might have about reliability of the stranger.

Frequently, a person may become a swindler's mark simply because he figures he also has an angle, whereby he may come out ahead of the stranger. The sharpest dealer usually wins.

The quickest way to get rid of a swindler is to start checking up on his reliability and his business. Merely asking for proof of integrity may send one a-flying.

Honest, dependable business people have no objection to having their records checked. Many encourage it. They know that the way to build patronage is through well-founded trust.

It's a shame that we can't trust everybody, but the record shows that not everyone deserves our trust — or our money!