

# Business Starts Speaking Out More

**N**EW voices are being added to the array of information and comment presented to the American public. These are business opinions that in the past may have been muffled by fear of government retaliation.

About a year ago, the Supreme Court of the United States made it clear in a ruling that business institutions, like individuals, may speak up on a referendum issue, whether or not that issue is germane to their business interests.

In this interpretation of our constitutional freedom of speech, the Supreme Court held that groups of individuals have that freedom, just as single individuals do.

Because they have been bound by so many regulations relating to what they might advertise or otherwise communicate to the public, businessmen have moved into this new freedom somewhat timidly.

As the freedom has become recognized as reality, there has been a noticeable trend in what are called "institutional advertisements" in

the press. These are ads which present facts and opinions about the company itself, what it stands for, or what its leaders think.

For example, a recent ad of United Technologies recommends "at your next meeting, remove the chairs, empty the carafes, turn the thermostat down to 55. A stand-up meeting could be a stand-out."

Smith-Kline Corp. published a full page ad in which William E. Simon, former secretary of the treasury, "examines the true cause of the inflation that can put an end to our way of life."

Alton S. Newell, chairman of Newell Mfg. Co., San Antonio, addressed a message to teenage Americans. "Now young people, I hope I have convinced you that you don't have to sit around wringing your hands, waiting for the end to come. You can change the world," he concluded.

This new freedom of speech and of the press can be a great asset, if used responsibly by businessmen to tell the truth about free enterprise.

Not all federal regulations concerning advertising have been removed. Some that exist appear to be proper, but government still may have gone too far in regulating other areas.

It is right that fraudulent, dishonest and misleading advertising should be prohibited. Those who engage in such practices should be exposed and punished.

Professional people have gained the right to advertise their services and rates. The public has a right to know.

Federal Trade Commission rules on advertising may get into social reforms. For example, FTC allows use of "organic" in food ads but restricts presweetened products that proponents of federal diet control disfavor.

Because business is the foundation of our economic system, it is important that the public know as much as possible about what business men are thinking, doing and advocating.