

Production Relies on Profit Motive

A WRITER in a national newspaper suggests that the best incentive for finding fuel to meet our energy needs is plain greed.

He denies advocating more greed in the world, noting that plenty already exists and it would do the job if the government would just let it work. Perhaps he referred to the profit motive.

We don't think of ourselves as greedy, but we should remember that builders of our nation were motivated by intense desires for freedom, land, homes, gold, oil and other assets that have contributed to our comfortable standard of living.

Before there can be accomplishment of any sort, motivation must exist.

Some people are not satisfied, no matter how much they do, but is such motivation necessarily greed?

Reformers who are crying for an end to the profit system and redistribution of the nation's wealth seem to make little distinction between essential motivation and excessive greed.

Often such people are low producers. Their form of greed may be an inordinate desire to share excessively and unfairly in benefits contributed by producers to the wealth of society.

Shortsightedness may prevent them from perceiving that such a system results in less and less for more and more, as has been demonstrated in countries which have squelched incentive and ambition.

A well-financed organization in Florida proposes that all federal corporate income taxes be placed in trust and distributed equally among all citizens registered to vote. They wouldn't have to produce anything; just be old enough to vote and register.

This sort of philosophy is showing up in Oklahoma among people who seem to be convinced that any desire to earn a profit on production is selfish, although they would be glad to accept a share of the profits.

There is a strong desire on the part of lawmakers to collect taxes from productive citizens and businesses, in order that they may have

more money to appropriate, spend and win votes for re-election.

The proposed "windfall tax" on oil company profits seems to appeal to many Americans, who may not recognize it as confiscation of wealth. If enacted, it would set a greedy precedent for government.

If it is right for Congress to expropriate profits of an oil company, the next claim might be that it is right for government to take profits of a grocery, hardware or department store, or even "excess earnings" of doctors, lawyers and plumbers.

Roy P. "Country Boy" Stewart tells of the reply he got in Chicago in 1952 when he asked Socialist Norman Thomas whether he would run again for president of the United States.

Thomas told him: "I don't have anything to run on. What the Democrats have not taken from my 1932 platform, the Republicans have!"

Voters don't always notice the origin of political ideas or results obtained where they have been put into effect.