

Hard Times Only Credible Promise

JIMMY CARTER might become the first president ever to run for re-election on a peacetime platform promising people hard times.

Candidates used to lure voters into their camps with stated or implied assurances of such things as "A Chicken in Every Pot," "Two Cars in Every Garage" and "Sixty Million Jobs."

Promisers in the 1980 elections may turn toward "Leave Your Cars in the Garage and Jog to Work," "Eat Only What You Can Afford and Stay Slim" and "Trust Government to Solve All Your Problems."

So far, promises by prospective candidates to initiate effective actions against inflation and high prices are scarce and tentative.

Escalating union contracts and minimum wage laws guarantee that everything we buy in the 1980s will cost more.

For the higher prices we may expect to receive less. Take housing, for example, where rooms are getting smaller and fewer as selling prices get bigger and interest rates

go higher.

The energy shortage has moved the administration to set minimum cooling comfort levels for summer and maximum warmth in winter.

Washington officials are trying to solve the fuel problem by urging commuters to use public transportation, even where it doesn't exist, or less convenient, time-consuming car pools.

Automobiles are smaller but cost more. Manufacturing specifications from Congress add hundreds of dollars to prices and then vehicles are taxed according to what they cost.

Which candidate will become the first to promise a ceiling on success — individual career or corporate business? Business firms report it is difficult to motivate potential managers to work harder for promotions, and Congress is considering a "windfall profits tax."

Taxes are discouraging. If a person succeeds in working himself out of poverty, he finds himself in a higher tax bracket to help subsidize those who do little or no productive

work, even if employed.

Taxes will continue to rise. That's for certain. In 1948, federal, state and local taxes took 25 cents of every dollar. Last year, the figure had risen to 36 cents per dollar. Tax spenders want more.

Feminists have been trying to prove their equality to men in any career. With continued inflation, working wives are becoming a necessity. Nearly half of all married women are employed outside the home as families find they can't survive on a single income.

This means less housework is being done and more meals are being eaten away from home. Children increasingly are becoming wards of day care centers, schools, TV and neighborhood playgrounds.

Unkept homes do not encourage appreciation of beauty, neatness and cleanliness.

Indications are that the 1980s are going to bring hard times. Candidates who promise the worst may win, because they will be able to deliver on their promises!