

'Think Small' Notion Leads Backwards

THE United States became the world's leading industrial nation and largest exporter of agricultural commodities because of an inherent desire to do things bigger, better and first.

Could it be that we are at the end of that era? We are being advised on every hand to "Think small!" We are told that being average is preferred to being better and that people can't be equal if somebody is going to be first.

Obese people are told to "Think small," eat less and lose weight. Managers are directed to cut costs. Computer designers are putting more memory bits into smaller spaces. A new Japanese hotel, described as "the business hotel for the year 2100," has plastic sleeping capsules so tiny guests must crawl into them. The whole world is being urged to have smaller families.

We are told that we have stretched our desires for quantity and quality beyond the bounds of our resources. The solution offered is to cut down, cut back, or cut off. Even government is doing it.

In the past, when Americans ran short on something, someone went out and found new sources or discovered a better way of doing things. Ingenuity, inspiration and perspiration solved problems.

It might be hard to pick a time when our attitudes toward achievement turned around. It certainly wasn't at the bottom of the Great Depression. It might have been in the period after World War II, when American industrial and agricultural productivity had enabled the Allies to overcome the power of Germany's Hitler and the ambitions of Japanese war lords. Our country was booming and prosperous.

Using freedom guaranteed by our Constitution, negative elements were able to undermine traditional American principles and convince millions that we have progressed as far as we can go.

Today, we are up against a widespread notion that the only way to go is backwards. Small cars, smaller homes, fewer luxuries, less convenience at higher cost are symptoms of deeper troubles.

Certainly, we have an energy crisis, but it was not caused by OPEC, which has a stranglehold on our economy. We caused it, and we could alleviate it by utilizing our vast coal resources and nuclear energy.

Inflation is another reason for the "think small" philosophy. One of its many causes is the fallacious concept that people become equal if income is taken from producers and distributed to non-producers. On the contrary, this may widen the gulf between the two groups. It has caused taxing and spending by more centralized government.

President Reagan is correct in declaring that we must "think small" regarding taxing, spending and wasting our resources.

That does not mean we ought to "think small" concerning personal idealism, technical achievement, cultural advancement, employee productivity, research and inventiveness, or industrial development.

In these and other important areas, Americans always should think in terms of doing things bigger, better and first!