

Free Enterprise or Socialism the Issue

FREE ENTERPRISE hasn't received a lot of attention from presidential or legislative campaign orators but it is a main political issue.

On one side are those who hold that government should do what it can to maintain a wholesome climate in which businesses may operate profitably, provide jobs, and pay a fair share of taxes, with minimal government regulation.

On the other side are those who insist "there ought to be a law" on virtually every aspect of business. The country has been moving in that direction, as laws have been enacted to tell employers whom they may or must hire, how much they should be paid, and what kind of working conditions must be provided.

Free enterprise is a system of private ownership and management of land, capital, stores, factories, banks, and other facilities. Only postal services, certain utilities, schools, roads and similar resources should be government owned and managed.

Socialism is a system in which all of these resources either are owned and operated by government or management is controlled by government. Socialism argues that each individual is entitled to an equal share of profits and benefits, regardless of contributions made to produce or earn them.

Socialism doesn't operate under that label to any extent in the United States. It operates through other political parties to get its policies into effect by people who would never regard themselves socialists or communists. This is being accomplished through legislative means, campaign contributions, political pressures on elected officials, and through the huge bureaucracy.

This trend is clearly presented by "The Talking Face of Government" at Enterprise Square USA on the campus of Oklahoma Christian College, Oklahoma City. Other features present additional principles of free enterprise all Americans should know.

It still is possible for smart entrepreneurs to develop small busi-

nesses into successful operations. Examples might be cited in manufacturing, retailing, oil production, and agribusiness, etc.

However, it is becoming more difficult year by year. One reason is that the day an individual goes into business for himself he has Big Government for a partner, with a strong voice in management and a hand in the till.

Socialist activists under other names are not the only cause of excessive government regulation. Deterioration of our national moral fiber has developed an army of crooks whose illegal activities are prohibited by laws not always well enforced.

Labor and other groups have obtained laws granting them special privileges, placing unfair burdens on businesses and consumers.

Provisions relating to these matters have been written into platforms of both major parties and many candidates. Voters would do well to find out what they really mean. We may sometimes be voting for socialism without realizing it.