

TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY

Y. A. FAZALBHOY

B. T. DASTUR



FORUM OF FREE ENTERPRISE

"SOHRAB HOUSE", 235 DR. D. N. ROAD, BOMBAY-1

"People must come to accept private enterprise not as a necessary evil, but as an affirmative good."

—EUGENE BLACK

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INTRODUCTION

It is acknowledged on all hands that greater production and productivity, as also self-reliance are absolutely necessary if our present economic crisis is to be overcome and the country is to have rapid and large-scale economic development to better the lot of the common man. 1966 is the India Productivity Year, which aims to create a consciousness in the country of the need for greater productivity.

In accordance with its educative role, the Forum of Free Enterprise, as in the past, contributes towards the attainment of this objective by publishing this timely booklet.

Mr. Y. A. Fazalbhoy, well-known industrialist and President of the Bombay Productivity Council, contributes a challenging essay on self-reliance in private enterprise. Mr. B. T. Dastur, a business executive, contributes an essay on practical ways of improving office efficiency.

The reader is requested to assimilate these ideas and to propagate the message of self-reliance, cost consciousness and greater productivity which will enable free enterprise to contribute still more to the prosperity of the nation.

April 12, 1966
Bombay.

Murarji J. Vaidya
President
Forum of Free Enterprise

TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

By

Y. A. FAZALBHOY

“Self-reliance does not mean that we have everything we need. No country is self-sufficient in all respects. Self-reliance is an attitude of mind. A poor man can be self-reliant while a wealthy person may be dependent on others. Self-reliance means making do with what we have and cutting out what we do not and cannot have.”

— Lal Bahadur Shastri

The country is passing through a critical stage. At a time when the Five-Year Plans were on the anvil, we had to face aggression by China in 1962 and by Pakistan in 1965. There is the continuing threat from China. The state of national emergency and the economy, therefore, demand a closer study of our development plans.

The total investment on industrial development during the Fourth Plan, both in the public and private sector, was estimated to be over Rs. 5,000 crores of which the foreign exchange component was to the tune of Rs. 1,698 crores. During this period, the total for maintenance imports was estimated to be Rs. 5,300 crores. In other words, the foreign exchange needs envisaged during the Fourth Plan were about Rs. 6,998 crores. Our exports during the same period were expected not to exceed Rs. 5,000 crores. This would, thus, result in a deficit of Rs. 1,998 crores which was expected to be largely met by foreign loans. The aim now is to meet this demand as far as possible through self-reliance and self-sufficiency. A formidable task indeed for any nation!

If we want free enterprise to continue to operate with vision and contribute its share to the nation's economic well-being, those engaged in business and industry must study carefully what is involved.

Of the many lessons taught by the hostilities, the most important is the paramount need for self-reliance and self-sufficiency. For the past several years, we have been extending our industrial base to cover every field of national life, aiming at production of more goods and services and at the utilisation of indigenous raw materials. But we must remember that we have been doing this with foreign co-operation and by accepting foreign aid. All sections have begun, more or less, to take such aid for granted and foreign technical collaboration for know-how as an essential pre-requisite for industrial growth. In fact, to a great extent our industrial structure is a foreign-licence based one. Recent developments have shown us that international power politics can create a very awkward position for us. Hence today's cry for self-reliance in all respects is of great significance.

Let there be no doubt that the basic development problems of our country will only be solved through our own efforts. Our problems in their totality have no parallel in history. We cannot accept partial solutions from different parts of the world, nor can we afford to reject even the most advanced technology from any source; but the integration of this technology with the needs of our country must be our own responsibility and should be carried out strictly in terms of our broad national interests irrespective of the quantum of effort or its duration.

People in the free enterprise sector have faced many a challenge so far. In order to serve its true purpose, technology needs a reorientation in terms of our wider interests. This can only be realised through our own efforts, and not necessarily by imported technology.

Self-reliance can be achieved only when the entire scientific resources of the country are mobilised for industrial development.

It is true that the dire need of the hour is self-reliance but we cannot disregard the vital point that we have to couple this with development and progress. Self-reliance is the ability to be able to sustain ourselves within our own

resources. Development and progress alone will lead us to our cherished goal of a higher standard of living where illiteracy does not exist and poverty is a memory of the past.

This task will broadly mean (i) indigenous substitution of maintenance imports both for defence as well as civilian sectors; (ii) working out designs for setting up large-scale industrial units, and (ii) the gearing up of scientific effort in the National Laboratories to these national objectives to a larger extent than hitherto.

If our aim is to develop and progress, we have to concentrate specially on three aspects:

1. Food and other agricultural products are vital since the gap between production and the needs of our growing population is widening. We have to accelerate the rate of increase in food production in order to keep pace with the demands resulting from a rapid growth of population and the higher purchasing power generated by the development programmes. A crash programme to increase agricultural production is the only solution to this problem. We have to attain maximum self-sufficiency in this sphere.
2. The country's need is to have a strong, well-equipped defence force which in times of emergency can depend on indigenous sources for food, arms and ammunition, transportation and other essential goods and services.
3. Equally important is the role of industries which help to advance our standard of living by offering more employment, producing goods for better living and helping to earn foreign exchange by widening the range of exportable products.

Steps taken to fulfil these vital needs will lead to self-sufficiency. We must not only build up our own manufacturing potential but we must also make our own contribution to technological knowledge. We must be creative.

The engineer engaged in production, the worker in the factory, the farm hand in agriculture and the scientist and research worker in the laboratories have all to face this challenge.

In the twin endeavour to achieve self-sufficiency and to develop and progress, the research worker has a key role and an important part to play. It is he who must show ways and means of developing new things with the available resources, whether they are machines or machine tools or defence equipment or items of everyday needs. He must even suggest how to develop articles of food or materials for our clothing and shelter. As David Sarnoff, the pioneer of radio, television and electronics industries in the U.S., observed, "Technological research was not a luxury for good times but a necessity for all times. If America renounced its traditional allegiance to the future, its free economy would be finished." He rightly pointed out that "The principle of competition must be interpreted in the light of new methods of production, new forms of organization, modern methods of distribution, and new creative forces which have entered industry".

Research in one form or the other is a must to sustain the growth of technology and there is a world-wide recognition that technology offers high standards of living. Nations are convinced that the only hope for an escape from poverty lies in modern technology.

There are broadly three types of research within industry:

- (a) solving day-to-day problems of production;
- (b) developmental work mainly based on the products and processes which a factory is handling; and
- (c) speculative long-range research with the object of finding entirely new products or discovering new reactions.

A serious charge levelled against free enterprise is the slow progress made by our industries which are controlled by financiers and not by scientists and technicians.

Accordingly, what we must do and proclaim is that we are aiming at and planning a "technological revolution"—a revolution that is sponsored both by the government and by the people.

Let free enterprise take into account that any discovery or invention of a new product or service or improvements in existing systems must be put to public service. Only when the idea becomes a commercial proposition, it enters the economic stream and becomes a part of the process of economic growth. Since the products have to be manufactured before they can be marketed, manufacturing industry is the pace-setter in economic growth, essentially because it is the sector where the rate of input of technology is highest. In short, we have to broadcast that the industrial worker, the farm hand and the scientist are in keen pursuit of higher levels of development and progress.

The phase of foreign technical collaboration, imported know-how, imported plant and machinery and of technical aid from abroad to establish industries rapidly had its utility in the initial industrial development of the country. Since this phase cannot continue indefinitely, the aim of this revolution is to achieve greater, better and quicker results in the development of our economy through our own efforts.

The objective of this "army of revolt" is to build up a mass movement of technological innovation and technical evolution. It is only then that we can bring about an upsurge in industrial production in the country.

The scientist and the engineer must make up their minds to solve all key problems of production. The range of problems to be examined and solved will be from the smallest change in production technique to matters related to the development of new materials, new equipment, new techniques and new working processes. We should not be afraid of bringing about changes, big or small, in our drive towards development and progress.

Free enterprise has to answer the charge that the principal reasons why imports have been heavy in the past are:

- (a) Ease with which the foreign exchange has been made available to private industry. The only difficulty has been in completing paper formalities.
- (b) Lack of knowledge regarding what is available in the country. There are no reliable directories or purchasers' guides available in the country, while new industries are coming up all the time.
- (c) Lack of available designs to load up spare capacities, and lack of design development organisations in the Private Sector.
- (d) Lack of emphasis on indigenous research and a drive to develop or utilise Indian technology or rely upon Indian engineers.

The future of free enterprise in Indian industry, therefore, is not secure if it does not aim at (1) lowering costs of indigenous products through increased productivity, and improved quality; (2) lowering intrinsic cost through improved plant layout, materials handling and the improving and rationalising of design, and (3) creating research facilities to develop indigenous know-how to limit foreign dependence; thus to be self-generating through regular technological advancement year after year.

The technician in the factory has to be aware of these key demands on free enterprise. A country becomes richer by increasing the rate of exploitation per head of its population of its natural resources of materials and human labour, or by improving the manner of that exploitation so as to fulfil human needs at less cost.

It was generally believed at one time in the West, and it is still believed in India, that scientific research cannot be planned and increased allocation cannot decide the rate of growth of discoveries. It was considered that discoveries are unpredictable and cannot be foreseen or planned for. This is true. But what this truth hides is the other, more important fact, that though the actual discoveries could not be predicted, their rate and number is determined by the funds made available and number of scientists employed.

There is another important consideration. The application of science to industry and returns from scientific ingenuity and inventions are not dependent on the scientists alone. Any survey would reveal that important developments frequently originate from the vision and drive of one man or a small group of men, both in small and large undertakings. There are far too many occasions when without a change in technical staff, market situation, or financial conditions, the arrival of a new man to a key position changes the entire aspect of the industry and its progressiveness down the line. This has led observers to conclude that progressiveness depends greatly on the key personalities and that an unprogressive undertaking can be made progressive by changing the quality of the key personnel. Placement of dynamic persons in key positions in the Private Sector is the most essential prerequisite for the utilisation of Indian scientific research. This alone may retrieve the Indian economy from its impending crisis.

The time has come for the great and growing scientific resources of the country to be exploited for the greatest benefit of the whole community. Research and Industry have to be and must become part and parcel of each other.

OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY

By

B. T. DASTUR

For us, this year is the Indian Productivity Year (the first of its kind to be observed in our country) and the aim is to encourage and implement progress in productivity in every field.

One, usually, finds a flood of literature, material and papers on better utilisation|conservation of raw materials, energy, packing material, proper stocking and arrangement of stores and factory sites, etc., but hardly one finds an emphatic discussion on Office Productivity.

Some time back, the Ministry of Labour announced that national awards would be given to those industrial workers who make "useful suggestions" to obtain higher productivity, economy or greater efficiency. But no provision of an incentive was made for those increasing office productivity. One reason for such an attitude is that the gains in office-economy are not as apparently tangible and quantifiable as in the field of production, such as reduction in the consumption of coal from 5-tons to 3½ tons, of waste yarn from 5,000 lb. to 1,500 lb., and so on.

We must accept two facts before proceeding further:—

1. The office is (and can be made) a productive unit; 2. Management by measurement (or results) is as much possible in an office as in mine, workshop or foundry.

Before we remedy the disease and suggest positive, practicable cures, we must know the causes that contribute to its creation, existence and perpetuation. Some very common causes of wastages, misunderstanding, duplication, inadequate utilisation of resources (men, time and machines) and imbalances in work-loads in an office are analysable. The list given below is not comprehensive:

1. In most instances, the Office Manager (whose main duty is to standardise and rationalise procedures, co-ordi-

nate the various activities of the departments, advise top-management in matters of office management and do constant research in cost-reduction in the office) is hardly given time to think. He is tied down with routine work of signing papers, tenders of low value, muster-rolls, etc.

The Office Manager must get (or create for himself) a quarter to half an hour daily to think!

2. Many a time there is no formal discussion, periodically, between departmental divisional Heads to thrash out problems of common interest, and only in crisis they deliberate. Consultation in and management by crisis is mismanagement.

3. Many managers and directors drawing upwards of Rs. 5,000 per month attend to and read incoming material of a trivial nature, because they do not appreciate the importance of management by exception. It means that senior management is concerned with deviations (abnormalities and sub-normalities) and more with what is wrong than with what is right.

If this principle is accepted in its true spirit (without taking it to extremes, and thus reducing it to an absurdity), senior management will be able to give a concentrated attention to the "wrongs", take remedial action quicker and prevent further deterioration immediately.

This uneconomic practice of top management concerning itself with trivial matters has two common reasons: a) mistrust of subordinates who handle routine matters; b) a pathological condition of the mind that refuses to delegate work. In one company (which is among the first 52 industrial giants) the executive director insists on seeing every incoming letter!

4. Other contributory factors which, directly, lead to poor productivity in the office are the absence of a critical approach and a review technique. Let us exemplify what these mean.

A particular form, procedure or arrangement exists in an office and those affected by its existence know its

limitations. Yet, nobody cares to question the limitations critically and attempt to minimize or eliminate them. As in the pure sciences, logic, philosophy and history, so in management should there be a critical approach—a questioning attitude. Once this approach is taken towards every existing procedure, it will highlight the fact that many procedures, arrangements and forms need a drastic change, while a few will be eliminated without consequent difficulty.

Often, a system, like custom, has a reason for its existence and outlives its utility. The review technique enables the reviewer to test the existing things in the light of existing requirements. Those practices that serve no useful purpose in guiding management in taking a decision, and those forms and reports which have no guiding and utilitarian function to perform must be expunged. The office is not a charitable institution where “infirm” practices are to be allowed to lodge themselves. Everything in an office must pay its way.

During the last War, a bank had its branch in Burma. The latter used to send copies of all important correspondence and of every document to its head office, owing to a constant fear of Japanese air-raids and disruption of trade in the event of Japanese occupation. For full 10 years after the end of the war, the practice continued till one cost-conscious officer questioned it! Such instances can be multiplied.

5. One constant cause of low morale and repeated friction in offices—all detrimental to its productivity—is that duties and responsibilities are not codified, demarcated and let known to those who work in an office.

Human ego being what it is, it prompts the office-workers to transgress limits, tread on others' toes, trespass into others' “territories”, duplicate efforts and then go in for “arbitration.” That is the finale!

6. A remedy—not easy to obtain—is to have a Manual of Individual Responsibilities prepared and circulated to all. A step further is to furnish an organization

chart in the manual which illustrates the location of each person (by designation and category) and the span of management (also called the span of discretion) he enjoys.

7. A factor of no mean importance in lowering office productivity is functional rigidity. Many a time, one finds that a particular person or a very small group of persons handles a particular function and refuses to impart the "Know-How" to trainees or successors. The result is a partial paralysis in a transition period.

It is the prime duty of the management to ensure that there is no monopolisation of knowledge-practices and procedures and that there is maximum functional flexibility.

8. This, seventh, point has evoked considerably and vehemently passionate discussions all over the world, including Russia. The principle (though very sacred) is within the ambit of management topics—Reward by Results or Promotion by Performance or Merit Alone is the Criterion.

It is now an acknowledged fact of enlightened management that merit alone should govern the functions of management and that rewards should be in direct consonance with results. Easier said than implemented!

9. In the name of economy and national austerity, little attention is paid to the working environment. This is essentially true of government departments which are non-commercial in character. Cramped, dark, dusty, poorly lighted and ventilated offices are the first enemies of high office productivity. Excessive use of floor-space (and ceiling space) leads to a situation where confusion is worse confounded and retards productivity.

Repeating the fact that the above causes are not the sum-total of all causes, let us now get down to the practicable remedies which almost any concern can care to study and most can implement.

Every company and industry will have problems endemic to itself and specific remedies are possible.

1. STRAIGHT-LINE WORK FLOW: In many offices, particularly old ones, adequate thought is not given to sequential processing of work, with the result that there is needless back-and-forth movement of men and materials and all needless movement of men and materials involves time, and therefore money. It does not need a String Diagram study to illustrate this wastage. To an observant man it is apparent. If the company is to construct a new office, it should consult the architects and systems engineers before a blue-print is made out.

ADVANTAGES: (a) Motion-Economy; (b) Fewer chances of loss or misplacement of papers.

2. STANDARDISATION OF WORK, STATIONERY, FURNITURE AND FORMS: Multiplicity is a costly affair and needs to be checked, except in case of profits through higher productivity.

ADVANTAGES: (a) Economy of bulk-buying; (b) Economy in teaching techniques to trainees and those undergoing rotation of jobs; (c) Uniformity (also in nomenclature); (d) Non-routine matters are kept to a minimum.

3. CENTRALISATION: Many a time, considerable duplication of work and improper utilisation of services and machines result from decentralisation. Many readers will agree that most of the following office-functions can be centralised: (a) Opening|distribution of incoming mail, (b) dispatch of outgoing mail, (c) reception, (d) typing|duplicating facilities, (e) control of forms (issue, amendment, elimination and introduction), (f) purchase of stationery|capital assets, (g) reference library, (h) common employee amenities, (i) communication|messenger services and (j) retention|destruction of papers (filing).

ADVANTAGES: (a) economy; (b) better control; (c) increased individual efficiency.

4. FLOOR-SPACE UTILISATION: Often, in prosperous concerns, precious space is lost in keeping unwanted, dusty records, spread over a large area, or a godown is maintained in a costly, office locality.

It should be ensured that a maximum utilisation of ceiling-space is made, that godowns are located in industrial areas, and every six months the filing department resorts to records-thinning so that more space is available for comfort and productive work. In a case, recently published, it was stated that piles of records in a government office squeezed out the workers. The departmental head sought permission of his controller to destroy heaps of records that were 19 years old. A qualified permission was granted: the records could be destroyed after two copies were made out of each paper. The remedy was worse than the disease, and it was not records-thinning but records-duplication.

It is a sound principle to follow that Cabin-status should be given only to those who are Officers or do work of a confidential nature. In one firm, with a collaboration, the Secretaries occupy almost as much cabin-space as the Officers!

5. RECORDAL AND WRITING: One basic fact which precedes records-destruction is records-creation (and, therefore, records-existence). It should be recognised as an important factor in the general scheme of economy that recordal should take place only where necessary and where non-recordal is dangerous, illegal, misleading or uneconomic. Everything that is written must justify its existence. That can be done by an Annual Audit of written material.

In one company, where, on an average, about 100 orders are placed daily, the order-chasing was done by written reminders and it was felt that the bulky chasing diary (file) constituted about a third of the floating papers. That company was fortunate (in the sense of the existing situation) in getting a dial-phone and all order-chasing was done on phone. Considerable paper work was eliminated.

Many persons in an office, in order to illustrate the validity of their existence, reply all communications. That must be checked.

One remedy is that all trivial mail and printed litera-

ture of no importance should be segregated by the mail clerk and sold as scrap, without allowing it to go to the desk of the executive or clerk, who may be tempted to reply it.

An extension of the principle of recordal of only necessary matters is to effect economy in their recordal such as by using standard, cyclostyled letters (or slips, for intercommunication between departments), or putting marginal remarks on a paper and returning it to the sender.

One simple, time-saving device of inter-departmental communication, in use in an Indo-German Office is illustrated below:—

Mr. A|B|C|D|E|F...Z|

With a request to: notice|keep|refer|sanction|check|await|advice|sign|consider|settle|return|discuss|see me|advise me|give me relevant correspondence|file|pass on to.

In concluding a treatment of this principle it will not be out of place to mention that records will not promote prosperity, but eat into it.

6. STATIONERY & CAPITAL ASSETS: The basic function of an office (irrespective of its size) is the receipt, recordal, interpretation and safe filing of communications. Modern business marches on papers—in the broad sense stationery—and sophisticated business have machines as hand-maidens.

It is a human propensity to go on acquiring new things and then abandon them after a short time. Executives and clerks alike will go on requisitioning items, even of a capital nature.

The first reaction, in practice, of a purchaser should be, "Is this necessary? If so, can we meet the requirement from within, particularly if it is a thing to be obtained on hire, for a certain period of time? Is a cheaper, Indian equivalent or substitute available?"

In one company, there was a German officer having a secretary knowing German and using a German type-

writer in which the arrangements of two keys was different from that of an English typewriter. After the Officer left for Germany and the secretary resigned, the typewriter fell into disuse. After about two years, when another German officer was posted in India, he requisitioned a typewriter. The Purchase Officer was cost-conscious and looked through his inventory of capital assets and allotted the idle typewriter.

The first duty of the Purchase (or even the Office) Manager is to ensure a regular and optimum utilisation of all machines and other capital assets. Idle machine=idle capacity. But if a machine has been rendered idle for inevitable reasons and there is a possibility of re-utilising it, he should not miss it. He should maintain a comprehensive inventory of capital assets which should show what is in or out of use.

The following are some concrete suggestions to effect economy:—

Use post-cards and "inland" letters, wherever possible.

Use the reverse of incoming letters and office-copies of outgoing letters for scribbling purposes, before selling them as scrap.

Use small-size scribbling pads instead of the large ones.

Type on both sides of paper, for outgoing and inter-departmental communications.

Retain no Master File copies, because out of 1,000 such copies rarely one copy is required to fulfil, genuinely, the purpose of a Master Copy.

If any copy is endorsed to any other person|department, it must mention the purpose of endorsement. Any department|person not really concerned with the receipt of a copy must refuse its acceptance.

Use as much cyclostyled material as possible.

Do not stockpile forms and stationery to such an extent that the paper goes brittle with the lapse of time.

No form will be introduced unless it justifies its existence.

Write only when obligatory (and make an optimum use of telephone and telegraphic facilities).

Use window-envelopes.

Use master envelopes for H.O. Branch correspondence and bunch together letters addressed to one party.

Use Kraft-paper envelopes and staple them, instead of cello-taping them, to enable re-use.

Use pre-punched letters and office-copies, which save precious time in the filing department.

In statements, avoid columns (||) and linear indications (=). It saves considerable time of the typists.

Use cheaper quality paper for drafts, internal memoranda and notes.

In order to make a proper utilisation of the red portion of a typewriter ribbon, type all drafts and internal memorandum in red.

Retain office copies only where you must. If no office copy is needed, do not type it in the first instance.

Never rush through any work, unless the consequences are dire, because the extent of inaccuracy varies directly with the volume of rushwork.

Apply Review-Technique to forms and attempt reduction or elimination. Change existing forms only if vitally necessary.

Use the reverse of obsolete forms for rough work.

Wherever practicable, eliminate card-board backs to forms.

Re-use files and folders left empty after destruction of records.

Use shredded paper as packing material and re-use packing cases.

Use mechanical pencils instead of wooden ones, to ensure a longer life, and issue new pencils only on return of stubs.

Instead of clips and pins, use staples, which are more economical.

Re-use teleprinter carbons for typewriter use.

Use cello tape instead of gum. It consumes lesser time.

Insist on a written requisition every time, except for urgent requirements.

Maintain a Flying Squad that will do all jobs during a period of major absenteeism or peak periods.

Provide two, three or four muster-rolls, instead of one big one.

One of the commonest and most apparent manifestations of poor office productivity is delay. There can be countless causes of delay but that does not imply that the evil defies solution. Some common factors of delay are:

(a) Poor office-arrangement.

(b) Poor visual (or non-visual) control which means that no targets are fixed for disposal of matters.

(c) An executive disturbs the clerks in their work too often. (d) Heavy absenteeism—indicating a low morale. (e) Poor instruction in office procedures. (f) Imbalanced work-load. (g) Improper planning of work. (h) Unauthorised visitors to the office, consuming the workers' time. (i) Backlog Syndrome—a sense of insecurity or a fear of change of job within an organisation finds a refuge in the Backlog Syndrome whereby the workers feel secure because they are always able to show Management that they have enough on hand.

(j) High rate of labour turnover.

The concept of higher office productivity has to be a constantly-practised affair, demands a mental awakening

of a high order to conserve all resources and utilise them in the best manner possible.

Productivity is cost-consciousness magnified and is a creed with practising managers.

No treatment of productivity is complete without a concluding reference to the Hawthorne Investigations carried out in the Relay-Assembly Room of Westinghouse Electric Company of America. In that room, there worked an informal group of girls who kept up the tempo of high productivity despite changes (deteriorations) in working environment and an experimental measure to give no bonus for above-average performance.

Productivity declined when, for experimental purposes, the informal group was disintegrated but better working conditions and higher wages were provided. It proved that the most important factor in productivity is still the human being and that a compact, informal group of workers can accomplish the finest even under trying conditions.

Thus, the crowning glory of productivity is a group of contented, dedicated workers, and its ultimate aim is their prosperity through a better management. Higher productivity aims at the betterment of the human being.

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The views expressed in this booklet are not necessarily the views of the Forum of Free Enterprise.

**"Free Enterprise was born with man
and shall survive as long as man
survives."**

—A. D. SHROFF

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