

Utmost efficiency in the free market place

W.W. Gregory states (in "Postal Service Blues," Nov. 29) that "There are 750,000 postal employees at the present time. What makes anybody think that the private sector could do the job with any less?" If governments are so much better at achieving the maximum utilization of a given labor force than is free enterprise, then why is it that the collectivized economy of Soviet Russia requires 40 percent of its labor force to harvest its wheat while the semi-capitalistic United States is capable of harvesting its wheat with a trifling 4 percent of its labor force?

Next we encounter the assertion that "If . . . the private sector did take over the postal service, they would take it with the idea of making a profit, and a good one. That being the case, the 20 cents we now pay. . . is just a drop in the bucket, compared to cost under the private sector." If governments are so

much better at achieving maximum cost-efficiency in regard to a given product or service than is free enterprise, then why is it that a tax-funded public education is

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nearly twice as costly as a private education?

Gregory appears to be lamenting the fact that, under a privatized mail system, the people who use the service are the ones who pay for it. Apparently he feels

that it is much more proper for the government to rob an individual of his money in order to provide unearned benefits to others. I will not bother to detail the moral reprehensibilities that are inherent in such a viewpoint.

In general, the reason why free enterprise will always be more efficient than a government is the rigors of competition. In a free market a company cannot possess a monopoly and must therefore contend with competitors. Under this system an enterprise that grows fat and unproductive (like the post office) will soon find itself confronted with an inescapable choice; become efficient or go bankrupt. The free interplay of market forces — when they are permitted to operate — will always act to create conditions of maximum efficiency of operations.

Brad Harrington
Mission Viejo