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## Trading Stamp Legislation Would Endanger Market Freedom

By VINCENT THOMAS  
Assemblyman, 68th District

Most people believe in the idea of "freedom of the market place," though few of us could do more than give a rough definition of the term. But California home-makers who save and redeem trading stamps are acutely conscious that legislative attempts to restrict or prohibit their use would seriously endanger that essential American freedom.

At every recent regular session of our Legislature, several bills have been introduced to limit or wipe out trading stamps. Some introduced in the 1957 session were referred to Senate and Assembly committees for interim study, and the factors involved in them were thoroughly investigated at hearings held all over the state.

LEGITIMATE trading stamp companies provided these committees with full information on their operations. Merchants using stamps gave their reasons for doing so, and described the effect on their business. Opponents of trading stamps also had their day in court, reiterated their difficulties in competing with merchants who use stamps, and repeated their arguments about who pays their cost.

During this year's session, five different measures on stamps were dropped in the hopper, some of which grew out of the committee studies. Again, lengthy hearings were held on some of these measures. Many amendments to them were suggested and some were adopted. Three were eventually passed, and were signed into law.

PRINCIPAL cause of complaint against trading stamps was the "improper activities of irresponsible trading stamp companies" (to quote the new law itself.) Stamp companies failed to set up proper reserves for redemptions, failed to fill redemption orders accompanied by the proper number of stamps, closed redemption centers without notice to merchants or the public, and even discontinued business without notice to anyone. Under previous law, there was no way in which stamp savers could protect themselves against such possibilities.

To end these complaints, and give California a progressive, effective control over stamp operations, legitimate trading stamp companies and their co-operating merchants joined legislators in working out law under which all stamp companies will be required, starting July 1, 1960, to take out state licenses to operate, and to post redemptions will be made as bonds to assure that stamp promised by the issuing company.

THE NEW LAW defines "trading stamps" so as to exclude any device used by the manufacturer or packer of any article to advertise or sell it (boxtops and the like), any device issued and redeemed by a newspaper or magazine, or any device issued to the customers of a single merchant and redeemed only by him. The trading stamp companies which franchise their stamps to retail merchants must take out licenses, post bonds from \$25,000 to \$100,000, depending

on the size of their business in the state, and pay the fees set by law.

The new law requires that trading stamps be redeemed by the issuing companies in cash as well as merchandise, if they are presented in an amount worth not less than one dollar.

IF ANY company fails to redeem its stamps, any holder of such stamps can apply to the state corporation commissioner for help in redemption. If the company still fails after he files a claim, he is authorized to claim under the surety bond.

Stiff penalties are provided for any violation of the new law, as well as for any merchant using stamps who discontinues them without due public notice.

### Legion Bowling Teams Forming

The American Legion bowling teams are now forming for the winter season. Anyone interested in playing on a Legion-sponsored team may contact Alex McPhail at DA 6-6869 for additional information.

Saturday night the Post will sponsor a dance which is slated to get underway at 9:00 p.m. The admission is 50c.

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