

say "charge it"

New York (LNS)-- In the smoke-filled board room, the paunchy and bejeweled men gather around a long dark table, coming to rapt attention as the elderly Caesar Bell clears his scratchy throat. The following transcript, unverified, purports to record the discussion which followed:

CAESAR BELL: Gentlemen, 1970 had its difficulties for our enterprise. In New York City alone, perhaps 10 million dollars worth of free calls were placed. And one per cent of our nationwide credit card revenues -- some 3.5 million dollars -- disappeared because of the wanton use of phony credit card numbers.

True, our profits for 1970 amounted to well over 8 billion dollars, but even the smallest leaks in our corporate boat may some day sink us. It is with great pleasure that I introduce (APPLAUSE) our own Arthur J. Peeg, Security Division helmsman, to explain the clever methods we have devised to keep Bell Tel. well in front of the insidious freeloader. (MORE APPLAUSE).

PEEG: Well, last year the commie hippies figured out the system. They would go to a pay phone, call the operator, ask to place a credit card call, give a number composed of the letter S followed by the real seven-digit phone number of a large corporation or other pillar of the community

and then a special three-digit city code different from the area code and always less than 599.

This year we ain't so simple. The procedure is basically the same but we've changed the order of the three elements and the letter is now keyed to the sixth digit in the seven digit phone number.

ABRAXIS MELLON: This is a little sticky for me unless you can be more specific.

PEEG: Why, certainly, Mr. Mellon, sir. In 1971 credit card numbers consist of any given phone number, then a city code, then a letter to match the sixth digit of the original phone number.

Some of the city codes, same as last year's, are: Detroit--083, Washington--032, Boston--001, San Francisco--158, Chicago--097, Philadelphia--041, New York--021, and Milwaukee--088. The letters that match up with the sixth digit in the phone number are: Q with 1, A with 2, E with 3, H with 4, J with 5, N with 6, R with 7, U with 8, W with 9, and Z with 0.

Thus, the President, God save Him, has the credit card number 465-1414-032-Q.

DEWEY PONT: Well, I must admit, it's an admirable step forward, Mr. Peeg. Yet something rubs me the wrong way here. This bunch of Red scum may well infiltrate us and get the system widely published within a month -- their fanatic devotion to destroying the profits of the greatest American corporations and

instating a godless system of free essential services is known beyond a doubt.

What I want to know, Mr. Peeg, is there any way for us to make someone pay if the word gets out?

PEEG: Sir, I can only say we're counting on absolute secrecy. We can threaten the receiver of the calls with ripping out their phones, but if they simply report that they receive many phone calls, and don't have any record of who called them, when, what can we say?

DEWEY PONT: Can't we charge it to the phone from which the call is made?

PEEG: Sir, they're using pay phones just like most of our legitimate credit card users. Let them use a home phone and we'll see they get electrocuted. But that isn't very likely.

WHEEL R. DEALER: ...which just proves what I've been telling you all along, boys. We're gonna have to settle down to brass tacks and get something going down in Washington. I'll be seeing the General tomorrow and I could simply ask him to pass the word on...

CAESAR BELL (cutting Dealer off): Dealer, you're a brilliant man, but let's give Mr. Peeg's efforts a working chance. You do know though, there isn't a monopoly in the country that wouldn't get in touch with you in five minutes if any cornerstone of American free enterprise really begins to shake. Gentlemen, I think we can adjourn for now, keeping Dealer's ideas on tap.

SEVERAL VOICES: Agreed...very well...right you are Mr. Bell.



Flash!

HELP SAVE MUDCRUTCH FARM

The boys are being thrown out because a dozen or so neighbors wrote nasty letters to the landlady in Tampa. Let's write to the landlady and tell her how nice her tenants are -- how nice a thing they did for the community. Write a letter and we'll pay the postage. Bring your letters to the Hogtown General Store, behind Great Southern Leather. I'd tell you the address but I forgot.

madman

RCF

IN CONCERT

Friday March 5

University Auditorium

8 p.m. 50¢ donation

Sponsored by Rose Community Center