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End "Feather Bed" Loafing

The majority of American citizens will say "Amen" to the following quotation from a New York Times editorial:

"The quickest way to increase manpower is to increase man-hours. We must increase the national working week to an average of not less than 48 hours. What even counts more than manhours as such is the total productivity of labor within those hours. We must end the feather-bed practices make work, the unnecessary built up by the unions, the jobs. We must increase the efficiency of labor, management and organization. These are some of the things we must do before resorting to compulsory service, with the tremendous problems this presents."

Specifically, examples of "feather-bed" practices referred to by the Times, are rules and practices thatlimit production, such as extremely short hauls between division points on railroads which under present contracts, constitute a full days work for the train crew, the limitaion of soft coal miners to 35 hours per week, and the restrictions on most effective utilization of labor in the construction field in buil ding trades contracts, which require the services of three or four men to do a job one could do more quickly alone

There is no use in longer trying to dodge the fact that the length of the work week and rules and regulations that restrict maximum individual output, are today the heart of the manpower problem.

When most individuals in the land, and when every sol dier in uniform has given up his normal living standards for the duration to help win the war, it is indecent, to say the least, for any group in this nation to use its power to try to maintain pre-war privileges and "feather-bed non-production" at the expense of our armed forces and the taxpaying public.

Look Again

A poster recently issued to retail merchants by the food rationing division of the food rationing division of the Office of Price Administration, tells the consumer in words and pictures how to get coffee. The merchants are displaying these posters in thousands of stores thru out the land. They are doing their level best to make coffee rationing a little less onerous to the public.

Consumers who become impatient with the red tape in which necessities of life are now wrapped, have only to look at the coffee poster again—the backside. There they can see a little of the red tape which the merchant must unravel before he can enjoy the privilege of serving his customers. In this case it is merely the requirements to be complied with if the retailer is to restock a few bags of coffee. Other requirements which the merchant must meet if he is to stay in business are so manifold and complex that the simplest of transactions has become a grim undertaking. Price fixing, quality and quanity of goods are all subject to complicated restrictions affixed with heavy penalties for violations. A $10,000 fine and ten years in prison is a prominent tag on most of the laws. The public seldom sees these evidences of the growing handicaps on retail distribution. Unexcelled service is taken for granted.

A lot of behind-the-scenes hard work and competence is needed to keep hundreds of thousands of clean wholesome merchandising centers operating at top efficiency. And anything that slows that efficiency unnecessarily cuts directly into our standard of living.

This is not to say that war time regulations are not essential. It is simply an expressed hope that the alredy formidable task of feeding and clothing the nation will not be made more formidable by the failure to realize that a smooth working distri bution system is vital to the war effort.

After The War

The war against the Axis is going fine, and as the day of winning grows nearer many great leaders are tack ling the problems of winning the peace. Only a few weeks ago we mentioned the criticism voiced by Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles against Chile and Argentina because they had not joined with theother Am ericans in taking sides against Germany.

General attention afterwards turned to the speeches of Wendel Willkie, and despite the criticism from many sources the fact remains that members of the A d m inistration, including the President, have said just about the same thing as Willkie—although they have used softer gloves in delivering their punches.

Assuming that we win the "Free World" of the United Nations will organize the peace, and the question involves a new League of Nations. The old League failed, and while it is difficult to say just why, it seems fair to blame France, England and Italy because they did not back up the efforts of former President Wilson. When the United States examined the pattern our Nation refused to go along any further because of lack of confidence in the European defaulters—and Allies.

Profiting by our sad experiences growing out of the former peace the Victory that will be ours will be followed by some kind of an organization of nations—no matter by what name it may be called. It must be strong enough and honest enough to prevent another horrible war in the next generation. That is not a theory, it is a fact.

Blankets and Sweaters in Order

Prepare for winter—two thirds of the cold weather is still ahead. Get out your warm sweaters and jackets, close off unused rooms, draw the blinds at night, serve hot soup for supper, place a rug beneath the bedroom door. Now is the time to learn a lot from your grandparents; they knew how to blanket down for the winter. A year ago it might have been said the American people are not quite as tough as they used to be. . . . but the boys in North Africa and in the Solomons are certainly disproving that theory. We can man age to get along at sixty degrees in order to bring them home sooner.

NOT TOO HOT NOT TOO COLD

Warning Against the Danger Of Bureaucratic Control

I think we can a llagree that a citizen's public duty in a democracy does not begin and end with the privileges of casting a ballot. A peo ple deserve the kind of government they receive. Dictatorship is a necessary evil for people morally or economically bankrupt. We are not bankrupt—yet. No one can bankrupt us but ourselves. . . . . .

As a country we are fighting with all our physical resources to keep totalarism from our front door, but are we fighting with all our mental resources to keep it from our back door? Free enterprise is the backbone of this country. It has enabled us to enjoy the fruits of civilization to a greater extent than the people of any other land. . . . .

Under cover of the war effort, certain elements are reaching out to concentrate more and more bureaucratic powers in the Federal Govern ment at Washington. Most of them lead us down the same road—away from the free enterprise which has made this country what is is today and toward a bureaucratic control of our everyday lives by political appointees.

Public opinion is the most powerful factor in this country. It was public opinion, awakened and articulate for once, which preserved one of the most precious checks and balances in our Constitution by defeating the attempt in 1937 to pack our Supreme Court. It was public opinion which defeated the attempted "purge" in the following year. .

Are we as a nation morally bankrupt? The answer is a thousand times no! Are we to become so thru our own negligence in allowing totalitarianism and bureaucracy to sneak in the back door while our attention is focused on our battle to keep them from the front door? The answer is still in our own hands, but the sands are running low. As citizens of a democracy it is our duty and our privilege to voice our individual and collective protests by every proper means within our power against an increasing bureaucratic control of our country.

Regulation—How Far?

The United States Supreme Court has rendered a unaminous decision upholding the government's power to regulate wheat production, even when the crop is to be consumed on the farm. An Ohio farmer who planted 23 acres of wheat was fined$117 for raising 12 more acres than his allotment of 11 acres under the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

Granting that the decision is in accordance with the letter of the law ,the reasoning of Justice Jackson, who wrote the decision, has farreaching effect on every American citizen. He said that wheat, even if grown for home consumption, could be considered within the scope of Congressional regulation if it "exerts a substantial economic effect on interstate commerce." To emphasize this point, he went further and said that even if such wheat was never marketed it is subject to regulation because "it supplies a need of the man who grew it which would otherwise be reflected by pur chases in the open market," and, therefore it "competes with wheat in commerce."

This is worth thinking over. Under similar legislation and court rulings, almost every productive act of American citizens could be construed to "exert a substantial economic effect on interstate commerce and therefore be subject to Federal jurisdiction.

If a farmer cannot feed his surplus grain to his own cattle because this affects interstate commerce, how long will it be before he is told he cannot kill a hog or a beef for his own consumption because "it supplies a need of the man who grew it which would otherwise be reflected by purchase in the open market."

Almost any human activity of free and independent men and women could be brought under the dragnet classification of "exerting a substantial economic effect on interstate commerce." The housewife who makes a dress for herself interferes with such commerce.

And this is happening in the United States where the independence of the American farmer is one of the most sacred traditions of our na tion.

GREETINGS TO THE MARYLAND MEMBERS OF THE GROUND OBSERVATION SYSTEM OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES

The following letter was received by W. Edward Barton, Sub-District Director of the Ground Observer Corps for Queen Anne's County.

Our Country is at war, but neverless this is a season of the year when we extend our greetings of Peace on Earth and Good Will Toward Men.

It would give me the greatest pleasure if I could shake the hand of those with whom I have been associated during this year and wish them each a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but under the circumstances this is impossible. Therefore, I wish to say to everyone of you that it has been a great honor and pleasure to have served with you in the work that we are doing, namely the Ground Observer System of the Army Air Corps.

The wholehearted cooperation which has been received at all times, and the spirit of friendship which has greeted me has made me enjoy the work which you and I are engaged. It is the unselfish gift of time, energy and loyalty from the men and women of Maryland that has made it possible for the state to take a most prominent position in this Country in observation work, and I wish to extend to you and your fellow workers my sincere gratitude and greetings.

I have seen you working under all conditions—rain, snow, storm, sleet and fair weather—and I know of no more loyal group of men and women than you, but please remember that trying days are ahead and I am calling more than ever upon the loyalty of you men and women who have been working on these observation posts night and day to carry on.

Let us, therefore, resolve at the end of this year that we will be more vigiliant than ever and filled with more zeal and enthusiasm. The war has not been won and it is the earnest prayer, I know, of each and every one of us that "IT MAY NOT HAPPEN HERE," but if it does, "LET US BE READY."

Again thanking you for the unstinting spirit of loyalty which you have displayed throughout the year, I will repeat that I wish for each and every one of you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Bright and Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours,
Col. HENRY S. BARRETT,
State Civil Director of the Ground Observer Corps.

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