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Friday, March 1, 1946

Check The Crime Wave

Wars breed crimes, and now we are in the center of a crime wave. Before the war closed more persons aged 17 were arrested than in any other age group. According to J.Edgar Hoover, one out of every twenty-three inhabitants in the United States is a member of a potential crime army of 6,000,000.And when Hoover makes a statement of that kind, it is true.

The majority of veterans will soon settle down and continue their civilian lives where they left off. But too many of these men and women are having hard times shaking off discouragement, or trying to regain their normal health. They are only a small part of the so-called law-breakers. But the youngsters of 17 years of age appear to have lost their head and too many of them become sports and adventurers.

Perhaps Mr. Hoover is the strongest power the Nation has ever had to fight against crime. He advises stamping out juvenile delinquency, sponsoring recreational centers, establishing physical training programs, increasing the efficiency of police agencies and improving programs to maintain high standards of ethics. He establishes first-class law enforcement agencies. He suggests that there should be an increase of programs for the proper care of children whose mothers must work, and he tells parents that they must pay very close attention to their primary responsibilities in their own homes.

The Big Turn-Around

That loud distressing noise that you hear originates from the voices of millions of taxpayers who face the March deadline. It not only takes money to run a war but it takes more money to reconstruct our own affairs, to say nothing about restoring the affairs of people in foreign countries who are holding on by their bootstraps and shoe-strings.

New homes are to be built at increased costs, and the furnishings for these homes will be twice as expensive as a half a dozen years ago.

Well, of course we must have clothing and everything from tasteless shoes to new coats, at new and higher prices.

It seems needless to speak of wage increases, and price relief. But that seems to be only simple arithmetic, after all.

Some of our optimistic officials in Washington admit that there is going to be a "bit of inflation," but Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public have found plenty of that article mixed up with their purchases at stores they depend upon for food, furnishings and articles of dress, including nylon hosiery, or even a hook rug to replace the worn-out Wilton or Axminster.

We might hope to get away with all these domestic problems, but the biggest turn-around of all really refers to the alleged "allied" nations, which boil over with disturbances.

The United Nations Organization will be housed in the Empire State Building in New York before the ruins come again. Let us hope that the highest building in the World may protect the World from the "high-hats" supplied by the World Government to save a World that seems to continue to be not more than half free.

The Housing Shortage

Undoubtedly there should be a great many more houses built in the United States to accomodate the great increase in population.

In many sections of the country houses and business buildings have been going skyward in prices since the war began. New legislation is proposed by the Administration to help civilians, including the military service, to finance new homes with Government money that can be paid back in installments by young couples and by their children, after the old folks are dead.

A few patriotic souls are putting up a big, and justifiable roar against the Government's do-nothing policy about making 500,000 publicly owned houses available for residential purposes. There are enough of these buildings in the Washington D. C. area to house hundreds of thousands of people looking for places to hang up their hats, pajamas, and nightgowns.

If all these public buildings that are now practically idle were thrown into home-building programs it would put a crimp in the real estate boom that is already out of control.

Public Questions

Congress and the Administration hang tight to the issues of price-controls-and-wage-increases. The current position seems to have boiled down to what has been called a wage increase, without denying the rights of industry to plead and beg for price increases.

The majority of manufacturing industries depend upon steel, and that will cost them five dollars a ton more. Manufacturers also pay higher prices for everything that goes into manufactured articles. How then, in simple terms of addition and subtraction, is it possible for industries involved in strikes to resume business? Would they have to gamble on fringe profits? Or wouldn't most of them wake up and discover their business operating at an absolute loss?

Is the political management of the Government and public affairs stupid enough to believe this would help reconversion?

Everybody seems to be repeating the slogan, "back to work." But very few seem to be worrying about getting back to full-time production throughout the country on a sound and reasonable basis that will last.

The Day of Free Choice

In a free country such as the United States has always been, commentators and editorial writers, when contemplating an important issue, get in the habit of saying the people must choose. For a long time it has been said in this country that the people must choose between capitalism and socialism,between government ownership and free enterprise—in short, between liberty and dictatorship. The day will eventually come when the editorial writers can no longer refer the problem to the judgment of the people—the choice will have been made.

Lewis H. Brown, chairman of the Tax Foundation, makes some telling observations that indicate the day of free choice for the people is coming to an end. "Today," said Mr. Brown, "industry is beginning to realize that its greatest competition for the citizen's dollar is government. There isn't such a thing as 'big business' today. Bigness is relative. And the biggest thing in this country today is government. It is the biggest trust that has ever been put together. It is more powerful by a thousand times than any trust or combination of trusts against which Theodore Roosevelt wielded his big stick.

"The melting pot of taxation is seething and bubbling over with appropriations, levies, debts, loans, subsidies, dual levies, exemptions, discriminations, confiscation, and unlimited powers, and in it all there is the hissing sound of inflation.

"When the people support the government and the government is subservient to the people, then the people will, of necessity, be subservient to the government, and representative government will perish!"

NOT TOO HOT — NOT TOO COLD

Tax Relief is All Imagination

All this stuff about giving relief to taxpayers doesn't show up on the Government books which millions of taxpayers will use to make their returns in March. Thousands of business firms will have losses in tax stores, rather than gain, and the concerns that find contracts and jobs out of the war are not getting back to normal operations. Meanwhile their factories and their capital are depreciating. Anyone who wants to get joy out of the general upset of affairs throughout the United States needs to believe in fairies. There isn't any relief "just around the corner," and what the OPA Administrator says to the contrary isn't going to help the situation.

Is the Telegraph Obsolete?

The cost of telegraphing three hundred words from Washington to San Francisco is about thirty-two dollars. You can telephone those hundred words across for little more than three dollars for the one of the difficulties of the Western Union.

And you can send an air-mail letter across the country a great deal cheaper than you can use the telephone recorder.

There is a rumor going around that the Western Union may ask the United States Government to take over the telegraph.

Subsidies Losing Their Charm

Several months ago there was a tentative agreement in Washington to discontinue the payment of Government subsidies. At the present time there is an inclination to put more subsidies gradually. A conservative estimate indicates that Government is now paying out $1,750,000,000 out of the Federal treasury to make payments to producers and distributors and to keep prices down.

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Bricks Without Straws

After the first World War the Government set up agencies to help people build new homes. That may have had something to do with the real estate boom that brought disastrous results to families who had gone over heads and heels in debt to build houses when building materials were high. Even so the Government today is boosting plans to build nearly three million new homes. That sounds pretty good; but before putting up good money or signing long term debts it would be advisable for home builders to watch their step and make sure which way they are going.

Russia is Very Disagreeable

There must have been pretty strong competition that led to a recent quarrel between the Russians and British in the United Nations organization when British Foreign Secretary Bevin and Russia's Mr. Vishinsky "feud."

At the San Francisco Conference the Russians maintained a disagreeable attitude toward the United States. But that does seemed to have shown over while the new one was getting under way in London. The Russians and the British are engaging in hot diplomatic discussions. It all has the same look as the performances in the early 1920's when the League of Nations was being formed.

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