

THE ARMY is in serious trouble over re-employment in the Pacific and particularly in the Philippines. What has been happening in Manila cannot be ignored. It is a threat to the orderly pacification of the Far East.

The reasons for the trouble are fairly obvious. In our intensely competitive society there is a will to scramble to get back into competition.

Old overseas are just plain weary. They want, as one of them said in a recent letter to a protest meeting, to sleep in a regular bed and live a normal life again.

While this may be sufficient to explain the Philippine uprising, it does not explain the unrest in at home. Neither the Army nor the Navy seems to have any real effect to tell the citizen about occupation is all about—the whys and wherefores of keeping armed forces in Japan, Korea, China, the Philippines, Germany.

The old order of spit and polish, do as you're told and ask no questions, continues to prevail. Citizen soldiers are prepared to accept that kind of discipline in wartime. But with peace they must be made to feel that the part of national undertaking and they are entitled to know the reasons for the undertaking.

There is a letter from a young Navy officer on duty in China. He is one of the command of an LST engaged in carrying Japanese prisoners of war and Japanese civilians to Japan from China and carrying back to China Chinese civilians who have been slave laborers of the Japs.

"Nobody," he writes, "seems to know why the United States Government is furnishing free transportation for Navy ships to all the civilians, although transporting the POWs is quite another thing. It is evidently the result of some military maneuver which I have never heard anyone explain about the duty other than to merely express complete bewilderment as to what reason there may be for it."

The duty, as he describes it, is pretty grim and since no one has given these young men any guidance when they were drafted it is to discredit the Chinese as compared to the Japanese. The Japanese soldiers, the crowding of some military maneuver, never been explained, although it is rumored to be a deal made at the Potsdam conference.

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How The Steel Companies Got Prices Raised

WASHINGTON

MOST of the President's appointments are very brief. Senators get fifteen minutes with him. Cabinet members get five to fifteen minutes. Only fifteen minutes.

So this week eyebrows went up when the White House bulletin listed OPA Administrator Chester Bowles for a full hour with President Truman.

Observers knew that the heat was on to increase the price of steel, and sell inflation's No. 1 enemy on giving the Nation its first big inflationary shot in the arm.

When Bowles entered the President's office, the die was already cast. Truman had decided that steel prices were going up. His job was to sell the idea to Bowles.

Truman himself had been sold by his old friend, Reconstruction Earl John Snyder of St. Louis, who in turn had been wined and dined by the steel people in Pittsburgh.

Chester Bowles also had talked with Big Steel leaders. His talks were far more energetic and persuasive than Snyder's. Bowles once ran one of the best advertising firms in the Nation, is a brilliant salesman. All his salesmanship was turned on Big Steel leaders.

"You are going to have a bigger margin of profit than you realize," he told them. "You are now working 44 hours in the mills and 52 hours in the office. When you drop to 40 hours, you will get a big saving in overtime. The price of scrap iron is now at a minimum. It will drop in the Spring, which means more saving. Production per man went up to 10 per cent after the last war. It will do the same after this war, which will save you \$100,000,000 a year."

So why not try out a new increased wage scale instead of a sharp increase? Try it out for six months and come back and we'll examine the whole question again. If you need a price increase then we'll give it to you."

Bowles is a persuasive talker. He has more charm than any Washington politician since Roosevelt. But he made no impression on the steel men.

After the last war, steel wages soared even without union pressure. Bowles summarized, "So did prices. And once inflation gets going, you'll have a price coming back until they get, not a 30 per cent increase in wages, but 50 per cent or more. So you can't tell where this thing will stop."

STEEL SAYS "NO"

Steel leaders shrugged their shoulders.

Bowles offered them a price increase of \$250 per ton to compensate for lower prices on certain types of special steel. But Big Steel leaders were convinced from their talks with John Snyder that they could get more money. He let the cat out of the bag that Truman could not and would not afford to force the Administration's bargaining power as one.

So, with the battle already lost, Chester Bowles went to the White House. He made no resignation threats—though some of his junior advisers had urged him to resign if he lost the inflation battle. But he was not a quitter. This would be the first great break in the inflation story.

If steel goes up, over the industry using steel will come back to the OPA for a price increase. Then the steel industry will be in a position to get it. The automobile people will come back and want higher prices. But these are probably less important than stable prices plus the steady market afforded by big, heavy, regularly employed workers—consumers.

TOWARD MONOPOLY

It is a step forward when labor shows a disposition to take into calculation the welfare of the whole economy. But for the time being, the basis of what industry can afford without passing increased costs on in the form of increased prices. But

Monopolistic practices, each such as are of the nature of industrial agreements, mitigate against price drops.

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Dorothy Thompson

For An Economic Philosophy

NEW YORK

IF ANYONE should draw strong conclusions from what has been said in this column on the General Motors-AWA controversy, let me say that I believe the labor side of the strike is an essential democratic right of management to make arbitrary decisions—as silly as to argue that men or free men is not to make millions, but widely to diffuse ownership and opportunity, maintaining workers at a certain level, and encourage and reward superior effort at all levels. There is only one reasonable and sound objective for any social or economic system, and that is the improvement of the human type. And, on the whole, neither subsistence existence nor great wealth develop human virtues.

Greater opportunity, however, is another matter. A thousand Chinese men often mixed with women and children, are crowded on the LST. In most cases there is no one aboard who speaks both Chinese and English.

Chinese civilians have for the most part never known even the most elementary sanitary facilities. There is no one who can explain about conduct on shipboard short of a lecture on the primitive method of education. The young Lieutenant's description of the LST at the end of the war is a masterpiece of understatement.

Even an elementary effort to explain how these desperate Chinese got that way and how they were treated would have helped. I believe. The men in our Army and Navy are not automatons. They are human beings and they must be treated as such.

But if the capitalist system remains a free market system, it won't be able to compete with the real or fancied greater security and equality of state capitalism. It must offer both more security and greater opportunity.

Since I think that by so doing they will put permanently on their feet the propertyless class, I am against it.

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THESE BONUS MEN

themselves bonuses in prosperous years, is irritating to workers and stockholders. Able management, well compensated. Bonuses to management and not to workers are on the assumption that management is investing its labor, while the wage-workers are selling theirs.

Some part of the workers' income should come in the form of return from work regarded as capital.

Certainly the object of a satisfactory democratic economy in a society of free men is not to make millions, but widely to diffuse ownership and opportunity, maintaining workers at a certain level, and encourage and reward superior effort at all levels. There is only one reasonable and sound objective for any social or economic system, and that is the improvement of the human type. And, on the whole, neither subsistence existence nor great wealth develop human virtues.

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Wrong Number

W. G. DOWD JR. Publisher

We have, with a mighty effort, attempted to keep our editorial approach to current labor disputes uncolored by our personal annoyance at the various inconveniences we have suffered. Strikes, we believe, are only a surface manifestation of a deep-rooted national selfishness, and it is unfair to single out the strikers among 100,000,000 citizens who are all attempting to make a killing out of war-borne shortages.

However, the strike of the various telephone unions appears to have become a personal issue between the strikers and the telephone subscriber. We, along with several thousand other local citizens, have been prevented from placing essential long-distance calls by glibling operators who, we are convinced, have no clear idea why they have decided against putting the proper jack in the proper hole.

It would be understandable, and in the spirit of the times, if the operators had elected to suspend service in order to force their employer to raise wages, shorten hours or improve working conditions. But this is a sympathetic strike, and the root cause is somewhere beyond the elaborate ramifications of the Telephone Company's corporate structure and of the various telephone unions. Down at the very bottom of a long Associated Press story reporting picket lines around telephone exchanges across the nation there is the revealing note that the strike started with 17,000 Western Electric workers, who have no direct

connection with the pickets, but who are trying to obtain a \$6-a-week wage increase.

It is difficult to understand how a suspension of long-distance service is going to assist the Western Electric strikers. Our wrath is certainly not directed against the Bell Telephone System, which, so far as we can determine, has no quarrel with the employees who want to handle our calls.

Moreover, this strike, like the one that preceded it a few weeks ago, embodies a strange element of caprice. The operators are in holiday mood, apparently finding the break in their normal routine quite a lark. And this, we think, is a measure of the irresponsibility of the union leaders, who have asked their members to walk off their job in sympathy with a strike that, so far as we know, was called before any real effort was made to establish a new wage scale.

A strike that is the last resort of organized workers who have tried to gain their ends without it can arouse a good deal of sympathy. A strike that is called in the spirit of the telephone walk-out is not going to arouse sympathy.

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Another Optimist

J. E. DOWD Associate Editor

"We have nothing to fear save fear," said Franklin Roosevelt at a moment when definition was the number one need of the nation. Early when the depression was first taking hold, Herbert Hoover had also proclaimed that nothing was basically wrong with the country except an excess of loose talk, which was frightening businessmen.

The problem was not so simple, but there is a public man who feel that everything will be fine if we'll just stop shaking in our boots and get to work. The latest to join the chorus is Robert Moses, New York Park Commissioner, who admits that things are pretty tough in the building industry, but adds that the nation there is the revealing note that the strike started with 17,000 Western Electric workers, who have no direct

connection with the pickets, but who are trying to obtain a \$6-a-week wage increase.

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