

Sound, If Temporary

In the first six weeks of their strike at General Motors the 175,000 production workers, who are, of course, members of the United Auto Workers, have paid around \$50,000,000 (\$47,460,000 according to the union, \$53,540,000 according to the company) to back their demand for a new contract with the company.

At a right price one of the union members are finding it increasingly difficult to meet as the strike grinds on. And, of course, elementary arithmetic indicates that they will soon cancel out the monetary benefits to be derived during the first year after they obtain the 30 per cent wage increase they demand.

But the mounting total of lost wages is a measure not only of the fatality of the strike, but of the conviction and discipline of the strikers. Under the leadership of Walter Reuther, they have insisted on more than a mere wage increase—they have insisted on the establishment of a new principle in labor-management relations.

General Motors has flatly rejected the demand for a wage increase, and it has been even more vehement in its opposition to the new principle, denying the President of the United States and taking a series of newspaper advertisements to explain why it is doing so. The company insists that it has at its own discretion, always based wages upon profits, but it also insists that any attempt by an outside agency to determine its

Ability to grant an increase would be a violation of its fundamental rights.

The General Motors argument is sound in many ways. Certainly the effort of the Federal Government to dictate a private corporation's wage scale would be intolerable in a free economy. But, at the moment, and for some three years past, the economy of the United States has been far from free.

Under our present system, when we employ arbitrary price controls as a substitute for competition, the President's demand for a fact-finding approach to the settlement of labor disputes seems to us logical and sound. Collective bargaining is an empty phrase at the moment, for one party to the bargain is pinned beneath a ceiling; in fact, to both sides the Government must have access to all the facts in the case when it assumes the role of arbiter.

Fact-finding, regarded as a temporary measure, is no greater threat to our system than price controls, and it is just as essential. But fact-finding, like price controls, is abandoned as soon as a first possible moment. That moment will come when supply and demand are normal again, when competition serves again as a brake on prices.

The way to get rid of controls, oddly enough, is to accept them and make them effective so that the volume of production can increase as it should. They will, then, vanish of their own volition.

Five Bonny Candidates

The entire County Board of Commissioners will run for re-election on a single ticket, offering their joint services to old Mecklenburg for another term. It has been a happy combination, established by Messrs. Haden, McEwen, McDonald, Porter and Cashion, and they will be able to offer their record to the voters as evidence of their capacity.

There will be, we suppose, politics being the sort of business it is, some opposition to this joint candidacy. There are always those who would like to replace the ins, and enough disgruntled citizens around to give them hope that the attempt will be worth their time. But it is going to be extremely difficult to find a point of attack in this case, for the Commissioners have kept Mecklenburg running smoothly and efficiently with a marked absence of alarms and excursions.

There will be some, perhaps, who will criticize the Commission for its lack of imagination. Its failure to rebuild the

County during its tenure. But that sort of criticism doesn't carry much weight out in the back country, the rural areas where the service of these gentlemen is most important, and we suspect, most appreciated.

We have been struck by the fact that they are such a fitting group to govern this Scotch-Irish stronghold. It is no accident, we think, that the board includes three Mcs and one Sandys among its membership. We are not certain whether Mr. Cashion springs from a highland strain or not, but we suspect he does, for he has worked smoothly with the others, contributing materially to the record they have established as one of the canniest and most purposeful Commissions in county history.

They are a bonny group, indeed, and we trust that the voters, if they decide to replace them, will select five of the same our strain, gentlemen who could turn up at the Court House, wearing kilts without exciting too much comment.

Let's Talk About Money

Despite the embittered cries of servilemen stranded in the Pacific, the current demobilization figures are impressive: as of January 1 the strength of the army was estimated at 4,300,000, which means that over 4,000,000 men have left the service since V-E day, and by June, if the present rate is maintained, the total will be reduced to 1,630,000; the navy had, as of January 1, released slightly more than a million men about one-third of its total strength.

This rapid demobilization has been a terrifically hard, most difficult, under the circumstances, than the original mobilization. And it stands as evidence that both services have, after their usual fashion, achieved over-all success, even though many an inequity has been unjustly penalized.

The task of dissolving the great fighting machine has been enormously complicated because neither service is clear as to what sort of peacetime establishment it intends to maintain. The navy's preliminary announcement called for a force of 2,000,000 and \$300,000,000 listed men, while Secretary of War Patterson has estimated the peacetime army's needs at 1,750,000 men, a staggering total by usual American standards.

These figures are off the cuff, and unquestionably the way to be revised when General Eisenhower completes what he has called his first major task, the drafting of concrete plans for a peace-time army. Already the Chief of Staff has a subordinate committee of manders for their estimates, and he has asked them to bare their demands on the "minimum minimum" and set up considerable box-office record. There was a cock that crowed at noon, that waked the parson, all shaven and shorn, and so on. And, of course, the most obnoxious of the race, one who even outdid the geese that come to roost with their cackling, was a cock whose triple crowing, caused Simon Peter to weep so bitterly.

No doubt the roster of the "birds of dawn" around Christmas is wont to grow at midnight, or is recorded in Shakespeare, "all night long." Taken all in all, he is a doughty fowl and not unworthy of the honor paid him by the French, who have made him their national symbol.

THE NEW YEAR greets Harry Truman with two big house-keeping problems right inside his own family.

One is slow-moving, prearranged John Snyder, the war reconversion officer, an old and intimate friend of Truman's, but no help when it comes to getting U. S. economy back on a sound, business-like, peacetime basis.

The other is fast-moving, hard-headed, James Byrnes of South Carolina, who is sincerely and conscientiously trying to rebuild the moth-eaten State Department and build a better world, but who has certain amount of friction with Truman.

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Now he sometimes forgets that there are men in the White House who are accountable to the public regarding foreign affairs and who are not so easily taken in as he is. He would send recommendations up to Congress with the Henderson Times, and he would frequently be called upon by Truman.

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RECONVERSION



From The Hendersonville Times-News:

There Are Banjos In Flat Rock

(NOTE: Not long ago we came upon a poem by Miss Olive Caruthers in the Hendersonville Times, bidding farewell to the poet, Carl Sandburg, who is moving to Flat Rock, in the course of her rhythmic remarks, Miss Caruthers wrote: "You will hear the darkies chanting a lazy cowboy song. To the thrum of hummingbirds like an old banjo...")

We wondered, editorially, how these words would enter the mind of Henderson County, now we know. Here is the reaction from the Henderson Times-News-Eds, THE NEWS.

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THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM

Once upon a time a troupe of bands was initiated by several tribes of monkeys. As the monkeys multiplied, the food supply of bananas and berries diminished, and there was no end to inter-tribal conflict.

As there were no rocks on the island, the monkeys fought with teeth and nail and stick. Although many monkeys were slain in this intestine war, no one tribe succeeded in gaining and maintaining dominance over the other tribes. Finally, the monkey colony that possessed at the time the best feeding ground would be raided by those living where the food was scarce.

Finally, spitting the coconut shell prevented quite a problem. The thick layer of fibre encasing the coconut prevented the shell from cracking when the coconut fell from the tree. They did succeed in removing the outer casing from away coconuts, but for an untold number of generations the shell of the coconut seed resisted all their efforts to crack it.

Finally they succeeded. Their success—like so many great discoveries—was due largely to the accident. One day an inquisitive monkey, who was experimenting by throwing shelled coconuts from a tall tree to the ground, with the

hope that a nice crack, accidentally, but a piece of coral reef had been broken up by the sea. The coconut broke into many pieces.

For a short time the monkeys were jubilant. At last there would be plenty of food for all. This meant the end of the war. There would be peace throughout monkey-land forevermore.

But the chiefs of the tribe of smart monkeys said, "No, we must first make sure that no other tribe of monkeys has 'shelled' coconuts."

Today, on the tropical island there are no live monkeys—only piles of coconuts, and cracked shells of many monkeys.

It's Time to Pull Out of the Orient
By J. C. HOLLOWAY
Here is a copy of a letter I have mailed to Senator Hoey.

MEMBERS of the American delegation to the United Nations Organization... a mixed bag of human beings, if ever there was one—

Members of the American delegation to the United Nations Organization... a mixed bag of human beings, if ever there was one—were on their way to London for the first important meeting of the new league.

In the land of dire warnings about the cold and the lack of food, they have gone off to London for the first important meeting of the new league.

But they needn't worry so much. They will stay at Claridge's Hotel, which has been kept especially for foreign visitors with its standards of comfort and ease more or less intact.

Even before they had left these shores, some members of the delegation had begun to fret over problems which will confront them almost at once. That is the question of the location of the new home of UNO in the northeastern United States.

The rivalry between certain cities is intense. Members of the American delegation fear they will stir antagonism if their recommendations become known.

But one special problem is troubling the Republican members of the group. They have heard of a growing movement to locate the new UNO headquarters at Hyde Park near President Roosevelt's home.

They do not like this at all and they are determined to oppose it, if it actually comes to an issue. They will speak up even though it becomes necessary to do so in the presence of the world's press.

While this sounds extremely petty, Republican members suppose they are well following argument. There is danger, they say, of a revival of isolationism in this country. That danger will be accentuated if the new league of nations seems about to become a monument to Franklin Roosevelt.

But there is little likelihood that UNO will be located at Hyde Park. If nothing else, the objections of the Republican members of the delegation will be sufficient to eliminate even before the committee visits America.

"Monkeys Are Stupid.."

By LEWIS AYER SMITH
CHARLOTTE
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From The Washington Post:

The Prominent Chanticleer

During the last few days the male of the gaithe, vulgarly known as the cock or rooster, has been attracting considerable notoriety. First we heard of one who continued to walk about and peck at food and even pose for photographers after his neck had been neatly severed from his body. Now the United Press reports from Nashville that a cocky little rooster swam the Cumberland River in six minutes in order to show two young boys.

Quote, Unquote

One of the greatest weapons with which to combat inflation is a plentiful supply of goods made available to the consumer.

"I still think we Congressmen are shockingly underpaid!"

—look at the national debt piled up without us getting our fair share of it!"

