

In The Flurry Of Forecasts

The flurry of year-end economic forecasts is heavier than usual, and also of unusual importance because whatever they may be, these crystal ball reports will probably furnish the basis of a last running argument between management and labor in the months immediately ahead.

There are three major exhibits at hand. Two of them are immediately suspect, coming as they do from opponents in the economic debate. Robert Nathan's analysis, prepared for the CIO, demonstrates that wages can be raised 21 to 23 per cent without any corresponding increase in prices, leading to an adequate profit. The forecast prepared by the United States Chamber of Commerce indicates that real wages, measured from the base period of 1926, have increased almost twice as much as the cost of living, thus proving that further wage increases in 1947 are not justified.

The Government's own forecast, prepared by the President's economic council, is rather an optimistic document, forecasting a year of great prosperity with nothing more severe than a "dip" in the price level which will probably only be a healthy reaction in the present boom. However, President Truman indulged in some personal amplification which was given more optimistic, but the President Roosevelt used to say, "If by Mr. Truman, the Government is to be restrained in labor-management relations, which are now free and unencumbered by Federal controls. Another wave of strikes, Mr. Truman warned, might very well bring the entire country to a halt, and bring on a "dip" that would even become a "recession" and perhaps even a "depression."

The President has been criticized, justly we think, because the New Year we suggest a pair of crossed fingers.

ganized labor might play in bringing on disaster. After all, we are back now to collective bargaining without Government assistance, and it takes two parties to bargain. A stubborn refusal to make a reasonable wage agreement may be on the order of as readily as a stubborn refusal to abandon a demand for an unreasonable wage increase.

And, unfortunately, in the two conflicting economic reports there are discouraging signs of a double logic. The CIO report is based in large part on the assumption, already once tested and proved false, that wages can be increased without pushing prices upward. Even if industrial profits were as large as Mr. Nathan claims they are, which is doubtful, there is no reason to believe that the ancient and accepted practice of passing along increased costs to the consumer will be abandoned. In the Chamber of Commerce report, the emphasis is placed on a comparison of dollar wages between 1939 and 1945, but no matter how neatly the lines cross on the graph, the worker knows that his pay doesn't buy as much today as it did a year ago. The way he figures it, he is being asked to accept a reduction in real earnings in a year when profits may very well be at their post-war high.

In urging restraint on both sides, Mr. Truman has taken up the only course open to him. He is personally leading the way toward a decontrolled economy, which means simply that he is abandoning all the weapons with which the Government maintained a degree of economic stability during the war years. Where he could once issue an order, he can now only make a plea.

It is our own curbsome view that the odds still favor a genuinely prosperous 1947. But we will all be trading on eggshells for the next few months. As a symbol for the cross of New Year we suggest a pair of crossed fingers.

Present From The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court could hardly have left a nicer Christmas present in the nation's stocking than his decision in the Wisconsin case. The court, by a 5-4 vote, reversed the lower courts, which had denied two Witnesses proper trial when they appealed from draft board rulings, in a healthy reaffirmation of traditional American civil liberties.

The Witnesses, an extremist sect, are no strangers to the courtroom. Their unbridled evangelical activity, which many a citizen finds extremely annoying, has placed them in the center of the spotlight during the war, when their vehement pacifism ran head-on into the prevailing patriotic spirit, they found the going even rougher, and, as these now reversed court decisions show, they were, by their own lights, martyred.

This case is important because it serves as a reminder that there is no such thing as limited tolerance. We cannot extend special consideration to those with whom we agree, or with whom we mildly disagree. We must also tolerate those whose teachings go against the grain, conceding at least a theoretical possibility that they may be right.

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of it, any argument involving a matter of conscience is admissible as legal evidence in civil liberties cases and must be properly weighed in the scales.

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The Case Of The Spanked Corporal

The intoxication of power never besets a man with greater fury than at the moment when he sees on his first pair of corporal's stripes and steps forth to bark his commands. "Right turn, (March)." The intoxication may pass through an upward progression through the ranks, but it is in that first moment, when a man who has been nothing becomes suddenly a man who has everything.

Realizing this, we have been waiting for some time for a new item that finally appeared this week. This story recounted the dissolution of a marriage between a Waco Corporal and an Air Force sergeant. The marital relationship between soldiers, we have believed from the moment when first entered the Army, might survive when there is equality of or great spread in rank, but when the ranks are unequal, the contracting parties are within one stripe of each other.

Private Speth held the court Cpl. Speth contemptibly pulled her rank on him, ordering him undertake those mental house-

hold tasks she considered beneath the dignity of a non-commissioned officer. Cpl. Speth in her turn complained of gross insubordination; one evening when the two old soldiers became involved in argument over the number and relative value of their campaign ribbons the private spanked the corporal.

Tragic, tragic, but the Judge had no choice but to dissolve the union. The dignity of the superior officer was destroyed by her inferior's falling hand. They could no more go on together than could General Eisenhower and MacArthur, while Cpl. Speth could take orders, and perhaps even a spanking, from Sgt. Speth without loss of face. She might even enjoy the process, although not, we suspect, as much as her husband.

Another Voice

Dry Charlotte And The Demon

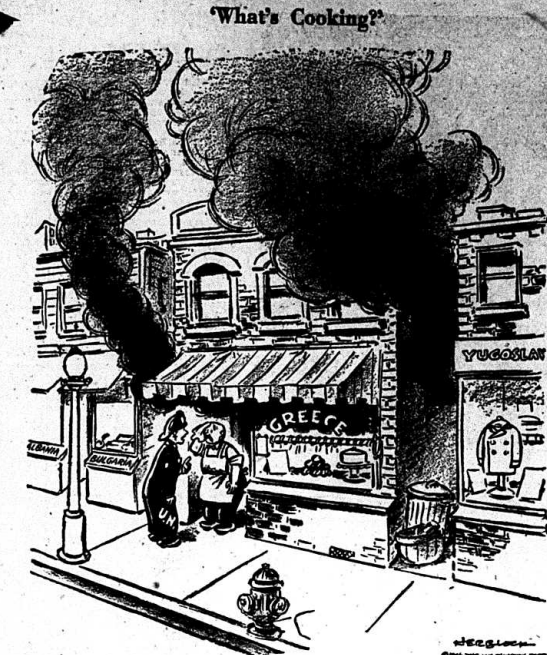
WITHOUT any desire to cast the first stone at Charlotte, we can't help wondering about the mysterious phenomena noted by the Charlotte News which states that in the greater part of the city of 1,000,000 population is now double that of its nearest competitors among the ABC countries.

The first glance it might be thought that the explanation is that lack of drink has driven Charlotteans to crime or that much yearning had made them mad. But such is not the case. There is little or no evidence of abnormality thereabouts. Judge W. H. S. Burgwyn, commenting on the prevalence of crimes of violence in which "knives, pistols, shotguns or anything else that will take human life" were used, stated that in nearly all these cases "you will find that plenty of liquor was available."

year.

An obvious expedient, if not a solution, would be for Charlotte to shift over from the criminally dry to the legally wet category by introducing ABC orders. But Speth doesn't know that way so far as Charles A. Bell Jr., who in his article in The Christian Century of November 13, entitled "Dry Up Liquor Profits," advocates that the Government run the private distilling business, but when you look at manufacturing and selling liquor at cost itself. But any dry city that has an arrest rate double that of the most criminal wet city would be a change, only if the drinking whiskey for a change, only if the drinking whiskey for a change, only if the drinking whiskey for a change. —Greensboro Daily News.

A left guard with a Christmas list was painfully injured today in a downtown stocking department when struck by a 15¢-priced through shopper.



What's Cooking?

Marquis Childs

GOP's Labor Plans

WASHINGTON UNDER the efficient generalship of the GOP, the strategy of the GOP majority labor legislation is taking shape. It is the desire of Joseph P. Kamp, Martin J. and the other leaders to get Congress out of Washington as early as possible. The bill may be too short if it is not agreed on some of the high-contrast members of the GOP. There is considerable pressure, for example, behind a bill to outlaw the use of collective bargaining. Others would allow the closed shop.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS Such a proposal is bound to stir the most intense feeling. They would change the whole pattern of industrial life as it has been evolving in recent years.

What is more, they open the way to government control not of labor alone, but of all industry. That is the other side of the curb-labor laws which have been the work of thoughtful members of the new majority.

Anything like compulsory arbitration is just as unpalatable to the leaders of industry as it is to the workers. It is a step toward a government straitjacket for collective bargaining.

The problem is to keep the bargaining process free and at the same time to take away from the workers the right to strike. The majority regards as grotesque. That will not be easy.

TRUMAN'S PRESCRIPTION

President Truman is now putting into his own prescription for resolving the labor vs. industry dilemma. It will be appropriate to his message on the state of the Union to be delivered shortly after Christmas. The President is an academic and a political interest in what the President has to say. The details on the new legislation will be called, however, not from the White House, but on Capitol Hill, where Mr. Truman's strategy will feel that in passing the Case

People's Platform

A Christmas Dream

CHARLOTTE

drinking of whisky concern others as well as the seller or drinker? Mr. Editor, to be fair shouldn't we say that whisky or beer is harmless or that it is harmful, one or the other? If it is a good thing for us to have it, why do we want to place so many restrictions on the sale of it and why put excessive taxes on it? Can we truthfully say that the cost of it deters the drinker? In our state so poverty stricken that they endorse a product that will take \$4.00 out of a man's pocket in order to put \$1.00 taxes in our treasury and then arrest a man for allowing himself to be influenced by the product we endorse? Is that fair?

Now Mr. Editor, you read the news item dated Anderson, S. C. Let's try to picture this thing in our mind. Right this minute this father is sitting on a porch with a drink in his hand. This mother is sitting at home, broken-hearted—something has robbed her of her mate and her child. It may be liquor is sold all over the State of South Carolina. Is the tax money of the State of South Carolina tainted with innocent blood? Is the State of South Carolina entirely guiltless in the death of that boy?

A Curse?

I AM taking the liberty of sending you a copy of a letter written by me to the Editor, Richmond, Va. This letter refers to an editorial in which appeared in your paper of Saturday, Dec. 7th.

Minimum Scale

AT a representative meeting held in Asheville the Educational Association of the State of North Carolina by unanimous vote approved the South Piedmont salary schedule in its entirety. From this has been no change of policy in regard to the Association's stand on the salary issue.

Drew Pearson's Truman Hopes To Hold Liberals' Support

WASHINGTON IN various confidential talks with Congressional leaders recently, President Truman has said he was still hopeful of retaining the strong support of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

"That's the sort of thing I mean," said Koppelman. "The important thing is that the man making less than \$5,000 a year is not being taxed. If there's going to be a tax out, I think it should be on the man making over \$5,000."

The very fact that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics dared make the study was one reason the last Congress cut its research fund. The study so infuriated Representative Charles McNary, a conservative member of the big farmers, that he has fought all appropriations for farm research ever since.

Bank Deposits Less THE President listened carefully while Koppelman added: "When the public has less income, all forms of business suffer. I found that to be true in the 1930's in my business. I am a newspaper distributor and my volume drops when people's incomes dropped off. I found they were even saving the few pennies it cost them for paper."

Message To Congress THE President's vital opening to a hostile Republican Congress is being whittled into final shape this week. At this writing, he is still debating several important issues, chiefly as to how far he should go in recommending labor legislation.

The study was begun in the Summer of 1944, while California was still in the grip of the drought which by which no one could own more than 160 acres of U. S. reclamation land. The study compared two towns in the San Joaquin Valley, one of California's great central valleys. —One Arvin, is comprised mainly of workers on large industrial farms; the other, Dinuba, is made up largely of people who own their own farms.