THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Unemployment And The Labor Shortage

FRED SARRATT'S figures on the workings of the Unemployment Compensation Commission in Charlotte tell a dismal story. This is a time when labor is scarce and wages are high—an employee's market. Yet 4,672 of the approximately 14,000 veterans in Mecklenburg County have already filed claims for unemployment compensation, indicating that they cannot find suitable jobs. In May there were 2,477 non-veterans on the rolls, a great improvement over October's 6,397 but still far too many. These are not unemployables: the non-veterans are eligible for payment only because they have previously held jobs, and the veterans, of course, are mentally and physically fit.

There are factors which temper the cold figures. There has been a steady downward trend among unemployed non-veterans. Moreover, many civilian workers held jobs that vanished with the end of the war. It is also true that the offered wage in some cases is too low, no higher than the payments made by UCC—an average of $12.59 a week for Negroes, $14.03 for whites.

The veterans, who now provide the bulk of UCC's business, are a special case. Their rate of compensation is higher (a flat $20 a week) and their occupational problems are much more complex. All have suffered a major dislocation as the result of their military service. Some, understandably, seek to abandon their old trades and make use of special skills taught them by the services. Many of the younger ones have no background of civilian employment and must start from scratch. There is a constant turn-over on the veteran's rolls, and those who draw compensation for only a few weeks while honestly searching for a suitable job are certainly within their rights.

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BUT when all this has been said there still remains the paradox of unemployment in the midst of a labor shortage, and the certainty that UCC is responsible for it. Mr. Sarratt's survey certainly does not indicate that this valuable agency should be disbanded and the whole theory of providing insurance against involuntary unemployment abandoned. But it does indicate a rather serious malfunctioning of the system, frequent abuses which can and must be corrected.

There can be no doubt that many veterans and non-veterans are using "rocking chair money" not, as was intended, to tide them over a temporary period of unemployment, but to underwrite a vacation. The "52-20 Club," made up of veterans who make no bones about their intention to take a year off, is no myth. For these people UCC payments have become a sort of bonus for laziness.

What can be done about it? Several things, we think, although reform is complicated by the fact that UCC is essentially a hybrid organization, drawing funds from both Federal and State Governments. Most of the abuses arise from interpretation of the term "involuntary unemployment." When the Employment Service finds a suitable job—that is one that meets certain reasonable specifications as to wages, hours and working conditions—it sends a worker from the UCC rolls to fill it. If the employer rejects him he is retained on the UCC rolls; if he refuses the job he is supposed to be dropped, and a good many are dropped. But, as Mr. Sarratt pointed out, the UCC is inclined to give the worker the benefit of every doubt. It shouldn't be very difficult for a worker who doesn't really want a job to make himself "unacceptable" to a prospective employer when he calls for an interview.

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THE laws under which UCC functions should be amended to reduce interpretation to a minimum. This could be done by setting a reasonable time limit—say 30 days—in which an unemployed worker is allowed complete freedom to seek a job adapted to his special skills. After that he should be required to accept *any* job which meets UCC's minimum wage-hours standards. After all, no man is prevented from looking for a job because he happens to have one; UCC could still keep him on its employment rolls and refer him to a better job if one turned up.

At the same time the administrative policies of both UCC and the interlocking but independent Employment Service should be overhauled. During the war the Employment Service was operated by the Federal Government but it has now been returned to the State. It should be merged with UCC as a necessary first step to the establishment of an efficient system of checking each job referral to determine whether or not the applicant is seriously seeking employment.

Most of UCC's troubles stem from the fact that it has had to face an abnormal situation brought on by end of the war, a situation not anticipated when it was established. However, the abnormal has now become the normal, and the time has come for the State and Federal Governments to overhaul the system. It should be done at once.

When Wee Doubts Come Creeping . . .

NOBODY, within our memory, has ever accused *The Textile Bulletin* of being a radical publication. Dave Clark and his associates have fought the good fight against the Government, the labor unions, and the Communists, usually managing to spend all three into one towering menace. There have been times when we wondered whether *The Bulletin* really favored Federal operation of the postal system.

We were, needless to say, astounded to find *The Bulletin* announcing editorially this week that "we have never been entirely convinced that this country could afford to wipe out price controls at this time." Of course *The Bulletin* was glad to see Chester Bowles go, for it is a well known fact that he is the CIO candidate for President. (What ever became of Henry Wallace?) And it concedes the sincerity of those who believe "that natural laws would control the situation and they may be right, but we have no way of knowing that they are right and if they are wrong a situation could exist which might bring state socialism upon us." And it thinks Mr. Truman was wrong in vetoing the price control bill Congress sent him, but doubts keep gnawing when "we recall the days after World War I, when 20-2 cents went to $1.05 per pound and then in the space of a few days broke to 25 cents per pound . . ."

The Bulletin keeps cheering itself up with knowledge that the Cotton-Textile Institute and the National Association of Cotton Manufacturers have proclaimed their faith in free enterprise and the willingness of manufacturers to police their own prices. But our contemporary can't seem to shake off the pictures invoked by the thought that prices might *not* remain within reasonable limits. "Should the elimination of price controls result in inflation chaos could result and our economy be torn to shreds . . ." Finally, *The Bulletin* declares:

> Things are in a "hell of a mess" in Washington, D. C., and while we have enough material to write several columns upon either side of the OPA elimination question, we are not capable of saying, with certainty, what will happen under its elimination or relaxation, or under control continuation and we can only hope that some divine power will guide this country into safe waters.

Well, we're not capable of saying either, and although we have argued for the past twelve months that the Federal Government should give "divine power" a little assistance in guiding us into safe waters, we know when we're licked. We join *The Bulletin* in placing our faith in God. But we're also keeping our power dry.

Another Voice

Git-tars Strummin' In Tennessee

"HILLBILLY bands, corn and all, apparently are essential to political success in some parts of the South. "Big Jim" Folsom's recent sweep in Alabama was intimately attuned to the strumming of banjos and the manipulation of what the 6-foot 8-inch candidate called a "suds bucket." The antics of Senator W. Lee ("Pass the Biscuits, Pappy") O'Daniel in Texas, and Governor James H. ("Bedbug Jimmy") Davis in Louisiana, are well known. And now, we regret to report, Edward Carmack has enlisted the services of Wally Fowler's hillbilly band in his redhot race against Kenneth D. McKellar for the post of United States Senator from Tennessee.

Not only so, but a few of the observations, pro and con, with respect to this development are something of a commentary on present-day politics in Dixie. On the one hand, there is the statement of an unnamed minion of "Boss" Crump (McKellar's chief backer), that "Mr. Crump don't need no git-tar playin' 'round Memphis." As an offset to this we have the following declaration from Silliman Evans, publisher of the Nashville *Tennessean*, and strong supporter of Carmack:

> Wally Fowler's band is famous for its songs of mother love, the lilting tunes of freedom sung under the starlight in the hills of Tennessee, and songs which our mothers have sung for generations about God and Savior and heaven. These songs be offensive to Mr. Crump, but to the people of Tennessee who love them, they will be welcome."

To which Mr. Crump retorted that the people are tired of candidates who "clown around like a patent-medicine vendor."

But are they? Here in Virginia, thanks be to Yahweh, we don't have this sort of medicine show in our public canvasses, but the technique seems to be highly effective elsewhere. Roy Acuff, of "Grand Ole Opry" radio fame, has announced his candidacy for Governor of Tennessee. It's beginning to look as though even Andrew Jackson couldn't be elected Governor of that State today, unless he first learned to croon.—*Richmond Times-Dispatch.*

Of all the sexes, Woman is the most mysterious, and we often wonder what the originator of the upside-down cake thought she was doing.

Always something doing in the U. S. If the citizen isn't shoveling dust out of the piano he's peering down a chimney from a rowboat to see it it's his house.

Whatever the original reason for the judicial robe, it is lost in the haze of antiquity. Yet what could be nicer, at this time, for concealing a weapon.

'Don't Get Excited—We're Just Blowing Up The Dam'

People's Platform

On Sectional Prejudice

MOUNT AIRY

Editors, THE NEWS:

WE hear a lot these days about race prejudice, and no doubt all right thinking persons long for the day when we as a people shall have overcome this and all other prejudices. To my way of thinking, however, the most despicable of all prejudices is, shall we say, section prejudice. I refer to that group of persons who in their smug ignorance of facts, adopt a wiser than thou attitude toward all who hail from certain sections.

We do have stupid and illiterate people here, as well as elsewhere in this fair land of ours. It seems inexcusable, what with so many newspapers, magazines and radios at our disposal. Nevertheless such is the case. Perhaps if we were all "conditioned" by the Chicago Tribune, as Mister Unwilling Citizen has apparently been, (I can spot them a mile away), we would now be dwelling in that Utopia which we all dream about.

Referring to the crime rate in the South, we have much too high a rate, and far, far be it from me to argue with the statements contained in Mister Unwilling Citizen's letter wherein he quotes evidence as to our crime rate. It is generally understood by all, however, that for a long time Chicago was cited as a parallel in speaking of gangsterism, bloody murders or what have you. It is encouraging to note that she has made improvement.

May I suggest that a fund be raised, THE NEWS acting as chairman, to purchase a one way ticket to Chicago for Mister Unwilling Citizen, and also to provide him with rocking chair money until such time as he may be able to obtain employment there. No doubt the stupid people who read your sheet, as well as any others in this section who are not so stupid, would gladly contribute to this fund!

—WILLING CITIZEN.

For The Record

(NOTE: We reprinted on this page an editorial from the Greensboro Daily News entitled "Those Who Didn't Vote," in which the point was made that five North Carolina Congressmen failed to be recorded on the question of sustaining or overriding the President's veto of the OPA extension bill. Representative Doughton, dean of the North Carolina delegation, has written to the Greensboro paper to set the record straight, and The Daily News has apologized, admitting that it was misled by incomplete wire reports. Here is Mr. Doughton's letter.—Eds., THE NEWS.)

WASHINGTON

I HAVE read the editorial in your paper of July 5, entitled, "Those Who Didn't Vote," and as the statements contained in this editorial are so misleading and so far at variance with the facts, I feel that, in justice to myself and others, I should call the matter to your attention:

Speaking of the President's veto of the OPA bill, you state, "whereas four North Carolina Representatives voted to override and three to sustain, five, or a larger group than voted either way, did not meet the issue, as the Honorables Cooley, Doughton, Ervin and Weaver were listed as absent and not voting."

I am enclosing the page of the Congressional Record which shows plainly that Weaver and myself voted to override the veto; that Mr. Cooley voted present but was paired to sustain the veto with Hartley and Slaugher; and also that Mr. Ervin was paired to override. You do not give the name of the fifth member you accuse of not voting.

You also state in your editorial that it is the sworn business of members of Congress to know, to meet issues and to have a share of responsibility in shaping national policy and enacting specific legislation. I agree with you that it is our duty to meet issues and to share responsibility in shaping national policy, but if I had been required to take an oath to always know just how to vote on every issue that arises, I would have declined to take such an oath, even though it prevented me from becoming a member of Congress.

This is one case where I had considered misgivings as to what was the proper vote to cast, as those on the committees and who had given the matter the greatest study were divided as to the merits of OPA and also as to the effect sustaining the President's veto would have. Some voted to sustain because they thought that would be the last of OPA. Others voted to sustain because they hoped to get something better as demanded by the President in his veto message; and between these two opposing views, the President's veto was sustained.

I do not find it reasonably possible to vote on every single question that comes before the Congress, but I never dodge a vote purposely to evade responsibility, as I had rather take chances on making a mistake than to show a lack of courage and willingness to meet my responsibility.

I am surprised that a paper usually so accurate and exact would misstate the facts editorially so far, as is shown by your editorial, especially when such facts are of official record. I respectfully request that you correct editorially the misstatements contained in the editorial referred to.

In closing, I take this opportunity of saying that I am not unmindful of, neither am I lacking in appreciation of, the many kind things you or your paper has said of my public services editorially since I have been in public life.

— R. L. DOUGHTON.

Thanks, Soldiers

SWANNANOA

Editors, THE NEWS:

YOU are to be congratulated on your splendid editorial, "The Reception of the Nisei." It is to be hoped that all people having the courage of their convictions will fight for racial tolerance and world brotherhood.

—T/5 BARBARA J. McCALLY.

Your editorial is heartily commended by the following also:

—T/5 BEATRICE CARSOK,
—T/5 FREDA M. POTTER,
—T/5 DOROTHY GUSTAFSON.

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be less than 300 words, typewritten if possible, and on only one side of the paper. Libel and obscenity will be deleted—otherwise anything goes. Each letter must be signed, although, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, THE NEWS.

Marquis Childs

Science Bottled Up

WASHINGTON

BOTTLED up in the House Interstate & Foreign Commerce Committee is the proposal for a National Science Foundation. This is the bill that would stimulate scientific research with the aid of Federal grants.

It is essential if only to make up for the serious deficit in scientific training resulting from our short-sighted draft policy during the war. It is essential if we are to hold our present place in research and technology.

Yet for some strange reason this all-important measure seems to be stuck in a committee pigeonhole. Rep. Clarence F. Lea, of California, chairman of the House Commerce Committee, is not the most energetic and wide-awake member of Congress. Yet even a dilatory chairman should have been able to get some action if there had been any real desire to get the bill out.

The Senate passed the measure with only a few changes. One of the amendments unfortunately eliminates social scientists from the provisions of the bill. A small majority of the Senate felt that it was all right to spend Federal money to teach men and women how to split the atom but it was not right to teach them what to do with the power once it was split. This, however, can be corrected at a later date.

TWO PUSHERS

If Sen. Harley Kilgore of West Virginia and Sen. Warren Magnuson of Washington had not constantly and persistently pushed, the bill would have been stuck in the Senate. These two men never let up.

They found a powerful lobby at work against the science bill. Kilgore traces this lobby back to the National Association of Manufacturers. He blames the opposition on the fears of monopoly business which sees its domination of research jeopardized by some of the patent provisions of the bill.

Those provisions specify that patents resulting from research done with Government funds shall be available to all business, big and little. This would help to overcome the great competitive disadvantage which small business has because of the fact that the big corporations with their vast resources can build, equip and staff laboratories of their own. As a report of the Senate Small Business Committee recently pointed out, the concentration of war contracts in a small number of firms increased the advantage which the giants already enjoyed.

An effort was made by Sen. Alexander Smith of New Jersey to alter these provisions when the bill was on the floor. But the Senate rejected his amendment.

BULWINKLE'S BILL

Kilgore and the others who have nursed this proposal along strongly suspect that the same business lobby is responsible for burying the bill in the House committee. On that committee are some who seem to want to suppress competition. One is Rep. Alfred L. Bulwinkle of North Carolina, author of a bill which would permit the railroads to fix rates in spite of the anti-trust laws that forbid such a practice.

Also on the committee, however, are members who want to see the Science Foundation Bill passed on by the House. Rep. Percy Priest of Tennessee is working hard to get action and so are others.

Another science bill that has had considerable popular support seems to be stymied. This is the measure calling for a concerted scientific attack on cancer. It provides $100,000,000 for an approach to this dread disease which, in a lesser way, would be like the all-out search for the secret of the atom.

Both Senate and House committees have held hearings on the cancer bill. Distinguished scientists have pointed to the pathetically small amounts available for research in the past. An all-out attack might actually solve the riddle of this disease which is in a sense the riddle of life itself.

BLOOM FOR IT

Because it provides for co-ordination of cancer research not only in this country but all over the world, the bill in the House went to the Foreign Affairs Committee. Chairman Sol Bloom says he is for it but whether it will get out of committee seems still a question.

These two measures are in a way a test of our intentions. Can we focus all the resources of our science and technology on solving the problems of peace? Or is destruction the only end on which we as people can unite?

Samuel Grafton

What We Have Lost

LOS ANGELES

THE debate over price control gave us, for a moment, the appearance of a people still deeply concerned with political developments; but the sound waves are subsiding, and the death-like calm of the postwar political lar begins to reassert itself. The country remains politically inert; the mood that comes up, from time to time, is a good-sized patch. Washington seems far away from the rest of the land; and one remembers with a desolate kind of feeling, how close Washington seemed to every city and town, not so long ago, in the days of Roosevelt and Willkie.

SOMETHING ELSE GONE

With those two men alive, the debate over price control would have been very different. Yet their deaths alone do not account for the difference. Something has gone out of American life with them, but it was perhaps already going before they died. What is this quality which has been evaporating from American life during the last few years? It seems to me that it was a quality of conciliation and hope, a feeling that there were liberal-minded men who could act as mediators between right and left, who could separate the two factions and yet join them, keeping them apart and also together, and helping us to maintain an ultimate faith in unity, both of men within nations and, on another level, between nations.

One wonders whether our faith in unity has not been damaged and whether this is not the real reason for the curious difference between the political atmosphere of today and that of a few years ago, when, occasionally, men's eyes actually shone, and there was, from time to time, incredibly, a swirl of ecstasy in the air.

There has been a kind of grubbiness about the price control fight; it has been a putsch, a veritable putsch, successfully carried out by one side. It wears the naked look of so many of our recent political struggles with, say, "Pappy" Lee O'Daniel on one side and the labor unions, mostly, on the other. The great mass of independent-minded Americans are not acting; it is almost as if they felt that there was no room for them in the struggle, that it must be fought out by the extreme wings, that the time for inspired temporizing and massive conciliation is over, and that a showdown might as well be allowed to take place.

POLAR POLITICS

The particular genius of Mr. Roosevelt and of Mr. Willkie was that they did not believe in these naked struggles, and many Americans joined with them in this affirmative disbelief. Since they passing, there has been a return of what might be called polar politics and this shows itself on many levels.

For even in the field of international affairs, our mood of the moment matches our mood on domestic matters: the liberals are sitting back, as spectators, while the Japanese partisans pretend to decide the issue.

Americans who have always been anti-Russian, have taken over the theoretical defense of our foreign policy, while the Russians have eagerly, almost gleefully, agreed to join battle. Those liberal-minded Americans who believe in conciliation and progress have been dropped by both sides; they have been pushed out of position by our Russophobes, and they obtain scant comfort from Russia, whose recent public criticism of the United States contain no recognition of the fact that we have vast numbers of citizens who do seek a good and peaceful world.

NO BASE LEFT

We could expect our own reactionaries to ignore the American liberal movement, if they could, but what has done even more damage has been the casual Russian consignment of the American liberal movement to political perdition, leaving no operating base upon which to be meant that enthusiasm for one world which made Roosevelt and then Willkie. And if there is a political lag, it is perhaps a sign of the ebbing of moderation, as men who once were participants become, first, uneasy spectators, and then turn away to smaller and more manageable concerns.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

War Dept. Lax In Not Checking On May

WASHINGTON

IF all the history of that fabulous character Andrew Jackson May of Kentucky and his family were compiled in one volume, it would make a novel more unbelievable than fiction.

The only other unbelievable thing is that grown men in the War Department with the responsibility of millions of lives on their shoulders should not have seen through the Congressman from Kentucky long ago. If they had read past references to May in the Washington Merry-Go-Round or kept the usual clipping morgue operated by any efficient newspaper, they would not today be so red-faced when called before the Mead Committee.

But they did not even bother to consult FBI files or the court records of the Justice Department. Instead, Secretary of War Patterson humbly went up to Congressman May's office when summoned. So did Patterson's aide, the present Undersecretary of War, Brig. Gen. Kenneth Royall. In Washington, Cabinet members or sub-Cabinet members do not call on Congressmen; it's the other way around. Reason why the War Department chiefs groveled before May will be told later.

Court Record

BEFORE Secretary Patterson entered the War Department, he was a very able judge on the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals. Had he bothered to do a little checking on the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee with whom he had to do so much business, he would have found a revealing record in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The record would have shown that May's brother-in-law and cousin were sent to jail for relief frauds back in the old Civil Works Administration days, and that May's political machine burned down the county courthouse in May's home town in order to destroy the relief records and prevent the conviction. Patterson also would have discovered that fourteen of May's friends and political supporters went to jail for relief frauds, and that May appeared as their attorney.

A Congressman is not supposed to take a case against the Federal Government. He is paid by the Federal Government and is supposed to be the servant of the Federal Government. Therefore, it is penitentiary offense to profit from handling a case against the Federal Government. Perhaps the ebullient Andrew Jackson May got around this on the technicality that he did not profit. Anyway, he appeared in court shamelessly and brazenly to defend one of the worst relief frauds in U. S. history.

Furthermore, if the Mead Committee would dig into the files of the Post Office Department, they would find that May exerted all sorts of pressure to have the case dropped. He used his influence as a Congressman in exactly the same way he did on behalf of the Erie Basin war profiteers.

Padded Relief Rolls

WHAT happened was that, back in 1934, Harry Hopkins and his CWA staff found that in May's home town of Prestonburg and the surrounding county, 112 per cent of the people were on relief—in other words, more people than were in the county. May's industrious machine, led by his henchman, Judge Walt Stumbo, had even dug up hundreds of names of people later identified as buried in the cemetery.

May's brother-in-law, J. D. Mayo, a grocer, was in on the racket. So was his cousin, Curtis W. May, who ran the Kreuger Baker & Grocery Co. Both went to jail. Mrs. Mayo, wife of May's brother-in-law, was in the county relief committee, while a niece also was employed there.

This was how the racket operated.

The county relief committee gave a relief certificate to an alleged needy person, who then took the certificate entitling him to $40 worth of groceries. The grocer gave him perhaps $5 in groceries and certified that he had received $40. Then the certificate was sent to CWA headquarters in Louisville at a net profit of $35, which was usually split between the grocer and the person on relief.

The situation was so scandalous that the Government discovered 22 sacks of mail sent to Louisville containing unhandled relief orders. In other words, they had merely been filled out and certified by grocers—including May's cousin and brother-in-law without even bothering to put the certificates in the hands of alleged relief recipients.

Since some of the alleged relief recipients were in the cemetery, this would have been difficult. Others were mountain families who could not read and write and had to depend on the county relief committee to fill in the certificates.

Courthouse Burns Down

AFTER the FBI got into the case, the local relief crowd burned down the county courthouse to destroy the evidence, not realizing that sufficient records remained in Louisville to convict them. In the end, the Government had to resort to a mail fraud case, since the bogus relief certificates were sent through the mails. Twenty-seven May henchmen and relatives were indicted, with sixteen finally going to jail, including the head of May's machine, Judge Stumbo.

Note—Reason Secretary of War Patterson and Undersecretary Kenneth Royall were so obsequious to May was that he was scratching their backs while they were scratching his. Late in the war, Patterson moved heaven and earth to pass a compulsory labor bill conscripting all labor. May introduced this for him and pushed it through the House. It was killed in the Senate.

Royall also has favored more military control of the atom and May has carried the ball for him on this. He introduced the May bill giving major atom control to the military and, more recently, has gleefully acquiesced in the sabotage of the Senate's civilian control bill by the House Military Affairs Committee.