

A State Minimum Wage Law?

FORREST SHUFORD, North Carolina Commissioner of Labor has been conducting a sort of one-man stump campaign for a state minimum wage law for some months now.

What Mr. Shuford wants to do, essentially, is extend the provisions of the Federal Wage and Hours Law to North Carolina workers not now covered by it because they are employed in intra-state commerce.

One reason, apparently, that Mr. Shuford has met with so little open opposition to date is that most employers are now paying a minimum wage of \$16 a week or close to it.

Mr. Shuford argues, with considerable logic, that the present lack of a state wage-hour law is not only a source of differential between two classes of workers in North Carolina engaged in tasks calling for the same energies and skills.

The Schools Are Also Business

LET us suppose that a businessman, practical as they make 'em and with a head as hard as granite, operates a free enterprise in North Carolina with 150 branches employing some thousands of workers.

And when the results come in let us suppose that he finds that in the last six months 75 per cent of his branches had had a heavy turnover in personnel; that thirteen per cent of his employees are now totally unqualified for their jobs and had been hired in desperation; that, even after his local managers let the bars down in their search for workers they still had no so many vacancies which he had to consolidate or eliminate some of the departments of the various branches; and that more and more of his most valuable employees were quitting the job every day.

What do you suppose our hypothetical businessman would do once he had received the ultimate absurdity? Would he get down his first burst of unseemly language? Certainly he would conclude that he was only one jump away from bankruptcy courts and that he had better get a moving reporter arrested at once either have to curtail his operations drastically, or attract more and better people to work for him. And he would know,

It Doesn't Compare With Sherman's

SPECULATION on the possible Presidential aspirations of Joe Eisenhower may have reached the ultimate absurdity' when The Washington Times-Herald published a copyrighted report that the General had remarked to a fishing companion that he would like to pass President some day. When a second reporter arrived at the Florida retreat to ask him to confirm or deny he said: "You know that's a lie."

Well this disposes of The Times-Herald report, but we are not all certain that it disposes of the Eisenhower boom. As a speculation from a general we could hardly trust it as a news item. But the newspaper, W. T. Sherman's, if nominated it will not accept, and if elected I will not serve.

to maintain any special records or make any additional reports to Raleigh. Nor would it subject employers to any inspections to which they are not now liable; present state laws set a 48 hour week for women workers and a 52 hour week for males (this limit for men would be respected incidentally by the proposed bill) and employers Labor Department inspectors to inspect employment records. Mr. Shuford insists that a wage-hour law would create no new bureaucracy; he could enforce it, he believes, by adding a few additional inspectors and a clerk or two.

Certainly the proposal deserves serious consideration by the Legislature. Whatever adjustments we may expect during 1947, it seems certain now that we are in for a period of sustained high prices. Few legislators could honestly argue that \$16 a week constitutes anything more than a bare subsistence wage in these times, or ever will this side of an out-and-out depression. And few employers could argue that such a minimum wage would constitute an undue hardship when it is being met successfully by all those engaged in interstate commerce.

That there will be some opposition, however, is inevitable. And to meet it we can think of no better argument than the experience of most employers under the Federal law. When the Wage-Hours Act was first enacted many an employer said, and some honestly believed, that it would drive him straight to bankruptcy. Today they are not only picking up their wages and a ceiling on hours has helped stabilize their operation and has protected them against unfair competition.

There is nothing daring, original, experimental or radical about Mr. Shuford's proposal. The record shows that a minimum wage law for workers of protected industries in North Carolina engaged in interstate commerce has worked to the general satisfaction of both employer and employee in the case of 60 per cent of North Carolina's workers; there is little reason to doubt that it would work equally well in the case of the other 40 per cent.

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being both practical and hard-headed, that the way to attract more and better people is to pay them more money.

Well, this is exactly what has happened to one of the most important businesses in North Carolina—the public schools. The figures we have here translated into terms of a businessman's management problem are taken from the latest report of the North Carolina Education Association, based on a survey covering 150 of the 181 administrative units of the North Carolina public school system.

We commend this analogy to all those in Raleigh who will be wrestling with the school problem in the months ahead. Bankruptcy is not too strong a word for the prospect facing the schools; it is, if anything, inadequate. The fatal weakness of the biggest business in the state would be a source of direct concern to only a limited number of North Carolinians, but the degeneration of the school system is a grave threat to every citizen.

We hear a lot of talk about the business approach to Government these days. (What ever became of the Silent Citizens, by the way?) And we certainly would like to see a businessman's approach to the school problem, one which recognized two of the fundamental principles of any sound business operation: (1) No enterprise is any better than the people who make up its staff; (2) You can't expect to get any more than you pay for.

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Mrs. Eisenhower also had some observations designed to discourage political speculation concerning her husband. She pointed out that reporter after reporter had never evoked, or had any affiliation with any political party. She had never, she said, heard the general discuss politics or politicians, favorably or unfavorably. (Well, that's not true, except insofar as to the Congress when the visiting firemen from CHAEZ went to arrive in droves at Sherman to tell the General how to deploy his armies.)

We fear, however, that General Eisenhower's lack of Party affiliation only makes him doubly vulnerable. It might commend him to both Messrs. Hargness and Biscoe if the going gets as hairy as we think it will around nomination time. A certified

Nose To The Grindstone



1921 And 1947

Lights, Benches, Buses

CHARLOTTE EDITORS, THE NEWS: One year ago today, the writer took up his residence in the fair city of Charlotte, and despite its relatively high position on the crime lists and its low position on the morality and educational lists, I have learned to like it.

None of the men who have made this country great were motivated by the lust for individual power. —R. O. VANDERCOOK.

Lights, Benches, Buses

CHARLOTTE EDITORS, THE NEWS: I AM in receipt of your letter of the 20th, containing a tear-sheet and note of apology re my communication of the 19th.

Resignation GREENSBORO EDITORS, THE NEWS: AN ANNOUNCEMENT has been made concerning my resignation as editor of the North Carolina Association for Wine Control.

JOHN W. CAFFEY. I feel that we have some measure of success in each of these undertakings.

THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be few then 300 words, appropriate if possible, and on only one side of the paper.

Quote, Unquote REAL disarmament cannot be achieved without adequate measures of inspection to insure efficient enforcement.—Senator Tom Connally (D) of Texas.

DREW PEARSON'S: Joe Martin Spurned Race For Presidency MERRY-GO-ROUND (Ed. Note—Drew Pearson today awards the brass ring, good for one free ride on the Washington Merry-Go-Round, to Joseph W. Martin, new Speaker of the House of Representatives.)

WASHINGTON WHEN Joseph Williams Martin Jr. was 21 years old he faced a three-way decision between a career of politics, newspapering or either of the other two.

COOLIDGE'S FRIEND In 1924, when Coolidge ran for re-election, Martin climbed on his hand-wagon and was easily elected to Congress.

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Marquis Childs Future Of Defense

WASHINGTON WITHIN the next few days the War Department has been assembling a series of spine-chilling, off-the-record press conference on the morale and discipline of the civilians who will advise the Truman administration on the military training which will be one part of this effort to make it more palatable to the public.

It is no coincidence that this comes at the time when requests for appropriations will go up to the new Congress. Policymakers are anxious and fearful that the great American public and with them their representatives in Congress will get to see what they will set back into the comfortable, somewhat indifferent of the pre-1918 years.

There are three key points in the program the War Department will present to Congress. Number 1: The Department is waiting ready to wield the economy knife.

It is a compromise form, this is likely to go through if only because it will mean some economy. Secretary War Robert C. Truett has worked unceasingly for unification. In recent discussions in the Bureau of Budget military appropriations, Patterson explained.

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