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Minimum Wage Should Be 90 Cents

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S proposal for a hike in the U. S. minimum wage was like a shotgun blast in a corn field. It set off a whole series of political flapjacks and cawings on Capitol Hill.

Finally on Friday, a Senate labor subcommittee approved a bill to raise the minimum wage from 75 cents to a flat \$1 an hour.

But in the House the cacophony continued.

Chairman Graham A. Barden (D-NC) of the House Education and Labor Committee said he was "pretty well satisfied" with increasing the minimum wage to 90 cents.

Rep. Ray J. Madden (D-Ind) called for a \$1.25 minimum to halt the flight of industry to low wage southern states.

Rep. Irwin D. Davidson (D-NY) said a \$2 minimum was essential to support a family of four in major cities.

Rep. James Roosevelt (D-Calif) said he would "go" for \$2 if necessary to sustain labor's purchasing power.

Rep. Barrat O'Hara said that expanding economy is necessary to avoid "the worst depression we have ever known."

Rep. Thomas J. Lane (D-Mass) said "every sincere American is ashamed" of the present minimum.

We agree that a boost in the minimum wage is needed. The present figure has failed to keep pace with the general increase in wages.

It was a cold, wintry day in 1925. A young Kentuckian crawled into a cave and got his foot pinned under a six-ton boulder.

It was a hot, sultry day in 1925. At Dayton, Tenn., two old spellbinders, one a fundamentalist, one an agnostic, battled it out in a judicial showdown.

It was a clear, fall day in 1923 at the Polo Grounds in New York. A Giant named McGraw told his World Series pitchers to "pitch to the big bum if he hammers every ball in the park into the North River."

About these events it is easy to find almost any detail, even when the weather. They are recorded in newspapers and books. They were the kind of events that exploded as they happened.

In East Orange, N. J., Sunday night, another kind of event from the '20s came to a close in the death of Robert Elliott Burns.

In 1922, Burns was sent to a Georgia chain gang for a \$5 hold-up in Atlanta. He escaped, went to Chicago and became a successful magazine editor.

His name became a swear-word in Georgia and many finally wiped away and his civil rights restored.

They never got Floyd Collins out of his new-found cave. They never learned how to pitch to Babe Ruth. Some still argue that Darwin was the devil.

They never got Harry Golden, editor of THE ISRAELITE, out of his religious freedom, and so did the Presbyterians who settled much of North Carolina.

Nothing strange about that Harry Golden editor of THE ISRAELITE, believes in religious freedom, and so did the Presbyterians who settled much of North Carolina.

When you start digging into original sources you find that we owe a tremendous debt to the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

At the very beginning of the country the Presbyterians were worried that the Anglican Church would gradually (by weight of numbers and tradition of the Mother Country) assume the status of a state church, and so the Presbyterians kept up a constant drive for religious freedom.

Actually, the Episcopal Church did become the state church in North Carolina; it represented the official religion of the colony from the first. With the passage of the Vestry and Orthodox Clergy Acts of 1765, its establishment became complete.

Paul Conkin in the January issue of the NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL REVIEW tells how the state church worked. An act of 1764 provided for the support of the clergy for education, and for poor relief.

On every third Easter Monday 12 vestrymen were to be elected in each parish by the qualified voters. Each year before Nov. 1, the sheriff was to collect a poll tax of not more than ten shillings from each taxable to support the parish.

If he could not collect the tax in a period of five days, he was empowered to sell a compensatory amount of the goods and chattels of the defaulting person.

The vestry was liable for all damage to an underpaid minister in accordance with the Fees and salary set by law. Most important in later controversies, the act

The United States, by the way, enjoyed the most prosperous year in its history in 1953—producing 365 billion dollars worth of goods and services. But that same year 23 per cent of all families and individual spending units in America had total monthly incomes of less than \$2,000, according to the 1954 Survey of Consumer Finances of the Federal Reserve Board.

Thus, it is not so much a question of whether an increase is needed but of how much of an increase.

When all is said and done, the administration's proposal of 90 cents an hour seems to be most reasonable. This figure is nailed down in the bill offered by Sen. H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey.

The 90-cent proposal was arrived at after a long, comprehensive study of U. S. economic conditions by federal economists. It was generally agreed by the experts that this is the highest figure which can be economically justified in present circumstances.

The danger is that a sharper jump might throw delicate economic factors out of joint—so much so that it will take years to put the country's house in order.

After all, if the present rate is unrealistic, it can be tinkered with again, but Congress, heaven help us, meets every year for just this kind of thing.

Every time a Gallup poll shows that Sen. Kefauver of Tennessee runs a fair second behind Stevenson in the affections of the Democrats, Stevenson gains southern support in the Congress.

Equally unpalatable to this group is Gov. Harriman of New York, who will instantly bid for the nomination should Stevenson fall or drop out.

Sen. George's leadership in foreign policy is a case in point. So is the compromise on reciprocal trade which majority leader Johnson fixed at the home of Sen. Bird of Virginia.

The hard truth is that under a determined Democratic president with a fresh mandate from the people, the pressure on the Democrats in Congress would have much less to say about what should be done than they are having under the Republican president with his chief of state attitude and his passion for getting along with Congress.

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Back By A Pot-Bellied Stove: The State Symphony

By HOWARD TAUBMAN

In The New York Times

A LITTLE more than ten years ago the General Assembly of North Carolina passed the "Horn-Tootin' Bill," which gave the North Carolina Symphony an annual subsidy of \$2,000.

The reason for this was a happy investment, and increased the size of the grant. Now it is \$20,000 a year.

North Carolina still has an outstanding bargain. For the North Carolina Symphony, which is conducted by Benjamin Swalin, serves the entire state. It takes miles to communities that had never encountered the living art in this form.

It plays for children as well as for adults and for a spirited force in the state. Needless to say, a \$20,000 grant does not pay for all these services.

The orchestra society has a variety of memberships. It receives help from public-spirited individuals and organizations. And it takes in some money from the box-office. But the subsidy makes possible more concerts for a larger than would be feasible otherwise.

The renovation of the building which this orchestra is that it has no permanent home of its own. It does not even have a regular rehearsal hall. Except for a week of rehearsals preceding the tour of the Little Symphony and another week of preparations for the fall ensemble, the North Carolina Symphony spends its entire season on the road.

Mr. Swalin and his musicians play in all kinds of auditoriums as they travel across the state in a laborer's van with a sawdust floor, heated in the winter by a pot-bellied stove; in Cape Hatteras, where the audience gathers in a dimly lit one-room school; in Banner Elk in the mountains, where the orchestra sits on a small stage in the town's only schoolhouse; and in some fine, modern halls.

STANDARD FARE The orchestra plays standard fare, such as the works of Beethoven, Brahms and Mozart; and also does some contemporary pieces. It brings in distinguished soloists, and it gives opportunities to local virtuosos, holding auditions to find young musicians in the area worth of such appearances.

This is as it should be, and it is a step toward the decentralization of the nation's musical life. Too many young musicians think that no career is possible without the endorsement of a major center like New York. And it has happened in the past that even their own communities paid them no mind until they had won such approval.

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