

A free, responsible and aggressive Press is democracy's first line of defense

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD
"CHEAP LABOR" BUGABOO

A certain amount of rivalry is appearing on the horizon in regard to control of the world's airplanes after the war and one fearful Congressman has even gone so far as to declare that "cheap, foreign labor" will make planes with which ours cannot compete.

Which is just another expression of that old bugaboo—the fear that America cannot compete with paper workers abroad. The fanatical theory has always been grounded to a large extent, and is laughably so with respect to airplanes.

To be sure, Chinese and Jap toolmakers could fashion little gadgets by hand, and make cheap imitations of many small articles produced here, but by and large, our business men have said their own minds.

The main portion of your argument concerns the mass—the group. Using 100 workmen as an example, you then point out that by their working 48 hours, only 84 would be needed to perform the same amount of work, and so forth.

The worker will get a 30 per cent raise in pay, but because fewer men are needed—theoretically—the increase for the same amount of work is but 8.3 cents per man-hour, the increase FOR THE GROUP would be but 8.3 per cent per man-hour. The capitalists are fine.

Argument Theoretical "Uncle Joe" is that it is so highly theoretical; it assumes perfect conditions. The employer can truly get along with 10 fewer workers.

Lower Trade Barriers The automobile industry, of course, is the prime example. All the coolies in China working for a cent a day could not produce a car.

Because airplane manufacturing is akin to automobile manufacturing, it is highly doubtful whether America can afford to "cheap foreign labor."

Dear "Uncle Joe": In answer to your communication in the People's Column, let me state what I believe to be the burden of your argument: You admit that a man when increasing his working hours from 40 to 48 (with 1/2 pay for the extra eight hours) gets an increase of 30 per cent.

Don't Worry About Rationing!

At first glance, the average Birmingham housewife was probably somewhat upset at reading the restrictions on canned goods. Plans call for consumption of less than half that of last year.

There is little use in being alarmed about it, for nobody is going to go hungry and die on the quantities and variety of food available will be much less than in the past.

Before you begin to get vengeful about the situation, think of our soldiers on the fighting fronts, and we'll wager that your complaint will die a horrible death.

What few sacrifices the civilian population has thus far made seem rather insignificant, when compared to the seven million or more in the armed forces.

No doubt changes will be made in time goes on. One need which suggests itself is the fact that married women who toil all day in a factory should not be expected to do the same restrictions as housewives who have all day to plan and execute their menus.

One thing that shocked the writer mildly the other day was to hear a tradesman say: "Why all these restrictions? Why not take the lot off and let prices go? They'll find their own level."

This man actually thought that he had nothing to lose from inflation. The truth is that as long as prices are fixed to keep down the cost of living, some scheme of sharing must be in force. There is no other way.

If there's humor in connection with a war in which millions of men die, it comes from Bern, Switzerland, where a newspaper man reports that Marshal Ion Antonescu, dictator of Rumania, has most solemnly "renounced any territorial claims against Russia."

The Rumanian probably has reasons to believe that he backed the wrong horse when he picked the Axis to win and is anxious to stress the defensive nature of his country's warfare, seemingly to put it on a basis with Finland.

Antonescu's reassurance to the Russians seems to be unnecessary, although thousands of Rumanian soldiers are on Russian soil, after participating in bitter efforts to conquer the Soviet.

THE TROUBLE OCCURS: Why hasn't something been done about a pay incentive to compensate the for the extra time required for the long auto trip? In a way, one could blame a worker who has to spend extra money and a couple of hours extra every day to drive to Willow Run when jobs are begging around the corner.

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Aerial Age Shrinks World

The effect of the air age upon global geography is illustrated by an advertisement of Consolidated Aircraft, which points out that New York is closer to Moscow by plane than to Buenos Aires, in South America. The distance to Moscow is 4,255 miles. But it is 5,310 miles to Buenos Aires.

The sea route from New York to Bombay is about 9,400 miles, involving a three-weeks voyage. By air, it is 7,790 miles, and the flying time is thirty-nine hours.

The same advertisement contrasts approximate traveling time, as we have known it in the past, with air-time. You can fly to Chungking, China, in thirty-eight hours instead of the thirty-one days formerly required for a surface trip; to London in seventeen hours instead of five days; and to Fairbanks, Alaska, in fourteen hours, instead of eight days.

Certainly the development of the airplane has speeded transportation thus producing a "smaller" world. Distances no longer protect nations from aggressors across oceans as crossed almost with immunity.

We cite these figures and facts in order to warn Americans that they must adjust their mental attitudes to the world in which they live.

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The Birmingham Eccentric is pleased to publish notices of events which have a bearing upon the general welfare of the community.

People's Column

Round Steak For The Dog

Editor, The Eccentric: The other day my wife went into one of the better markets here in Birmingham to buy some chopped round steak. There was about a pound left, and the woman who was being waited on at the time said, "I'll take the rest of that round steak for my dog."

The thing that concerns us is not that we had to go without it that day, but that there are people, during these days of shortages, who are so utterly thoughtless and selfish that they will eat good meat and feed it to their dogs, when there are cheaper cuts of meat and fish foods available.

48 H WEEK: Editor, The Eccentric: It's amusing the way you editors of the Birmingham Eccentric come to you to get your information for the popular week. Just how do you measure this sort of rate-labor cost?

One hundred men receive \$1 per hour for 48 hours, or \$480. For 4,000 men hours for \$4,800. By increasing the hours to 48, in order to produce the same amount of goods, it will only require 3,425 men, or to give you the benefit of the increase, only just because however, 84 men working at 48 hours equals 4,032 man hours; but that's your break. Now each man will receive for his 48 hours of work \$3.36, or \$52 which as you say is an increase of 30%.

Now, in the past, the selling cost of the new steel was about 30% at least 30%; this has been reduced greatly because of present market conditions.

Consumer News Let's All Help! SHOES: Now is the time to go through every closet and get out all the family shoes and see just how many you have.

INTEREST IS UP: With the announcement this week of a stringent post rationing of meat, interest has zoomed in garden space. If you want garden space, or wish to have plowing done, call at the Defense Service Center, 131 Pierce street near Maple.



"Citizens—the name of American, which belongs to you... must always exalt the just pride of patriotism... the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings and successes."

Weekly High Scores: Bowling Scores table with columns for Player Name, Score, and Date.

Junior Army Busy Collecting Books

The junior "armies" of Birmingham and its environs are on the march when it comes to the victory book campaign. In the thick of the fight, every household has been or will be covered for possible literary loot.

HOUSES ALIVE LEAGUE: Bowling Scores table for the Housewives League.

Let's All Help!

Now is the time to go through every closet and get out all the family shoes and see just how many you have.

GARDEN VICTORY

Now's A Good Time To Make Your Plans: Build a frame to fit in the excavation. The sides must slant sharply from a point above the window, almost to the ground.

County Meeting: A Victory Garden rally, with Paul Krone, State chairman in attendance, will be held at the Community House Thursday, March 4, at 8 p. m. It is a county-wide rally.

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ROSS RIDDELL, Chiroprapist: Office Hours in BIRMINGHAM Every Day But Wednesdays. Phone 9183, Residence 1872, 211 WARENS BUILDING.

Happenings of Long Ago: 50 YEARS AGO Feb. 23, 1893: "What with crinoids and hoop skirts, hugging in full dress is in danger of becoming a lost art." 25 YEARS AGO March 1, 1918: "Local police have been instructed to round up youths who are loitering and make them go to work or to war."

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