

DIVIDE and CONQUER

Under nourished, poorly clothed and poorly housed people, whether they be rural or urban are a danger to the stability of government. They are a fertile field for radical ideas and isms. In a land like America, where most everyone reads, writes and thinks, where we have had years of experience in self government the danger is not so great. We have come a long way in the last ten years in correcting the abuses and misfortunes of the speculative spree of the twenties.

Mothers are happy when their children are radiant faced, healthy and making progress in school. Happy mothers make for happy homes and happy communities. These things can only be had when men are gainfully employed at good wages. When our city cousins are regularly employed farm mothers are happier because their husbands, their boys and girls are better clothed and enjoying an optimistic outlook on life. It means a ready market for all they can produce at good prices. The two combined make for humming factories and busy transportation facilities.

Yet only last week I heard several farmers at scattered points over this district condemning organized labor and calling it the fair haired boy of this Administration. I am not a labor baiter, and I know that agriculture must supply the food and fiber for all our people, but I do know that you and I as farmers found our products begging for a market at ruinous prices when factories closed and laboring men tramped the streets looking for jobs. Sad faced urban mothers stoically watched their under nourished, ill clothed children go unsmiling-

ly to school. Farm mothers, with an abundance of food, saw the farms that had become as dear to them as members of the family sell under the Sheriff's hammer because its production would not sell for enough to pay the taxes and interest. I want to discuss with you a few of the objections, for now is the time for understanding and tolerance for the wellbeing of Democracy.

The most erroneously understood and most frequently objected feature being the 40 hour week:

The labor laws do not prohibit a work week longer than 40 hours. It simply serves as a measuring unit for compensation and prevents over fatiguing. Seven out of ten workers in war industries are putting in 48 hour weeks. In the critical machine tool industry skilled workers are putting work weeks of from 50 to 70 hours. All labor would gladly put in longer hours but are keeping up with the supply of essential materials.

Hard working men need more energy supplying food and the increased sales at grocery and meat stores is evidence that they are purchasing increasing quantities. The extra pay for the longer week is sorely needed to meet this increased living cost. All of which means a larger market for our farm products.

The second most talked of feature is the charge of exorbitant fees to secure a job and hold it. I quote from an O.P.M. published notice. "The Government and Labor Unions are opposed to such practices. Both invite any worker who believes that he had to pay an exorbitant fee to get or hold a job to write the full facts to the War Production Board. A

prompt investigation will be made."

The funds accumulated by the various labor organizations are being invested for post-war security.

It is conservatively estimated that organized labor will purchase 3 billion dollars worth of War Bonds during 1942. Auto workers have already pledged 50 million dollars, Amalgamated Clothing Workers 50 million dollars, Textile Workers 25 million dollars, Marine and Shipbuilders 15 million dollars, Retail Clerks 15 million dollars, Wm. Green, President of AFL has pledged 1 billion dollars from AFL Locals. If the National income approximates 105 billion dollars, labor's income will approximate 15 billion. Placing 20 per cent of their total income at the disposal of the U. S. A. to beat the Axis is a demonstration of faith in our democracy equaled by few groups, and a splendid assurance of continuing progress during post-war days.

We cannot build morale by lowering living standards. We must continue to fight for our economic security. The price of freedom is constant vigilance.

Divide and conquer has been the successful strategy of special privilege groups long before Hitler used it as Nazi strategy. Mistakes will be made, for the effort is so far beyond normal and the need for speed so great we would need be supermen to avoid them. But we cannot make the mistake of being divided group against group at this time without serious damage to the unity needed for the war effort and the writing of the peace.

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