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RUSSEL C. ROTTGER

INDIANAPOLIS can ill afford to lose the unselfish service of Russel C. Rottger. The community is confronted with another depression winter. It faces months that will bring heavy problems as the city and nation creep back along the road to recovery.

Mr. Rottger was always ready to give himself wholly to public service. He never asked anything for himself. Public commendation embarrassed him. Yet his sound judgment and good cheer invariably were back of every altruistic municipal endeavor. His reward was in just doing things for people.

He was a comparatively young man. His company, the Indiana Bell, had advanced him rapidly to a vice-presidency. He was the antithesis of the old-fashioned public utility executive. It was his belief that a public utility was a public trust and his mind was constantly thinking over the problem of how his company could give better and cheaper service.

The fact that he was a company official never inflated him. He was not too self-important to go out personally on a trouble call. Thousands of telephone subscribers came to know him in this way. It is a pity that he now never will have the opportunity to work out some of his plans for bringing telephone service even closer than it is now to the individual subscriber.

Most of all he will be missed by his friends. He had a rare capacity for friendship. Mr. Rottger leaves behind the best of all memorials—a life of real accomplishment for his fellowmen.

WHERE IS THE LABOR BOARD?

GENERAL JOHNSON is worried about strikes. He should be. The epidemic is spreading. It is costing many millions of dollars. It is hurting employers and labor. It is delaying recovery.

But what is General Johnson going to do about it? So far he has made a speech about it. He told labor leaders at the American Federation of Labor convention that strikes should stop. He even descended to cheap talk about subversive influences.

Such talk is futile. Labor leaders are not responsible for the strikes—in many cases the workers have gone over the heads of their leaders. Subversive influences are not responsible.

The NRA and the national labor board are responsible to the extent that they have failed to perfect efficient mediation machinery to handle the disputes behind the strikes.

Disputes between capital and labor regarding enforcement of the codes are inevitable—even though both capital and labor act with the utmost good faith there will be many misunderstandings and honest differences of opinion. Those in turn are apt to lead to strikes by labor or lockouts and shutdowns by employers, unless the official mediation boards are quickly available.

So far the administration has fallen down on this essential part of the job. Thousands of complaints and disputes have arisen. But NRA has been too busy—genuinely busy—in code making to face this situation.

The national labor board under Senator Wagner, which was named by President Roosevelt for the specific purpose of handling such disputes, has been too slow and too timid. Doubtless there are excuses and doubtless some of them are valid. It takes time to organize such a board.

But whatever the alibis in the past, there can not be much more delay in the administration's labor mediation machinery without a dangerous increase in strikes.

Every day the White House lets the steel trust and Wall Street defy the government in the captive coal mine fight, every time NRA ignores a major code violation, every labor dispute which the national labor board neglects, will encourage capital to exploit labor and will encourage labor to strike for its legal rights under the new deal.

Labor is too near the starvation line to strike for the fun of striking. When there are large strikes now it is because the workers are convinced—rightly or wrongly—that is the only method of self-defense.

It is for the national labor board and other official agencies to prove to labor by government action that strikes are not necessary to enforce the law, and that the government is enforcing the law.

CRY HAVOC

ONE of the chief hopes of developing a successful campaign against war lies in the growing resolution of the young intellectuals to stand out against the conventional patriotic and "blood-and-thunder" philosophy.

Beverley Nichol, a brilliant and popular young British writer, in "Cry Havoc" has prepared a head-on attack upon war and the war system which deserves to be circulated along with Mr. Stallings' pictorial history of the war.

The keynote to Mr. Nichol's book is found in the following sentence: "I believe with every fiber of my being, that the hour now has struck in the world's history when every man who wishes to serve his country must realize that 'patriotism' is the worst service he can offer it."

He thus expresses his opinion of the armament industry and its capitalistic supporters:

"More death, more dividends! More blood—more bonuses! Each shell that screams across the sky . . . no matter over what forsaken country that sad sky may lower . . . is bringing money into the pockets of Armsville shareholders. Perhaps only a penny or two, but every little helps." Thus may the men in Bolivia, in Rumania, in Italy, or wherever the Armsville writ may run, console themselves. Their entrails are blown out? Their leg is hanging by the knee? A portion of the brain

is protruding (as the medical reports so often delicately describe it)? No matter. Some nice old soldier's widow in Bournemouth can buy a few extra flowers for her husband's grave next Christmas, because Armsville are paying their dividends as usual."

There is no denying the force or logic of Mr. Nichol's scorching book. The real test will come at the outbreak of the next world war, which Mr. Nichol's friend, Mr. Wells, predicts about 1940.

WHEN TO PREPARE

FOR years liberals urged upon the country the idea that a public works program must be planned far in advance if it is to be an effective weapon against business depression. Today, faced with urgent need to spend public works money for employment and business revival and finding it hard to do, the country is learning this truth.

On the face of it, spending money fast seems an easy thing to do. As a matter of fact, it is not so easy, as any person who has ever built a house knows.

Getting a public works program under way, an administration must first of all examine projects for feasibility, for economic soundness, for value to a community, for proportion of expenditure that will go to labor directly, and to labor indirectly through material industries and transportation.

When that is done, it is necessary to draw detailed engineering or architectural plans for the job. That is where most time is lost. Finally land must be acquired, legal difficulties ironed out, and bids let.

All but these last stages may be attended to in advance under the kind of long-range planning advocated. With such a program ready, government construction could be used to check a depression at the beginning when it would be less costly to do so. Or if we are neglected for any reason, it would be ready for a crisis such as the present one.

Now, while the facts are clear in our minds, this country should begin preparing for the future by preparing in detail a new public works program. It even may be that we will need to use it before we are out of the present woods. And if we do we should not repeat the dangerous experiment of being unprepared.

EASTMAN'S EXAMPLE

FORTUNATELY the emergency railroad transportation act contained provisions protecting labor from bearing the brunt of the economies that were sought.

It was evident, as the law passed, that all the economies proposed could not be brought about; some high in congress even suggested that with the provisions protecting labor retained, the co-ordination act might better be abandoned.

Of course, it was not abandoned; it was passed and signed by the President, who took Joseph Eastman off the interstate commerce commission temporarily and made him administrator of the law with the title of federal co-ordinator of transportation.

It's time to see what Co-ordinator Eastman has accomplished with this law that some thought faulty.

He has three achievements to his credit.

First, at his insistence, and with his co-operation, the federal government finally had moved into the steel rail price-peggling issue; and as a result, the steel companies will get an order for more than 800,000 tons of rail, and nearly 250,000 tons of fastenings, if they will reduce prices.

Second, he has taken a determined stand to outlaw company unions.

Third, he has suggested means for railroads to standardize equipment and save money in these purchases, and he has urged that the carriers no longer subsidize mines by paying higher than the market price for coal. If the railroads really want to help the mines, Co-ordinator Eastman suggests, they can reduce the freight rates on coal.

These three achievements do not mean that Co-ordinator Eastman has taken the railroads off the federal "relief rolls." They are the outstanding results, thus far, of his effort to help the railroads help themselves under the guidance of the federal government. It is not unlikely that they will result in large savings to the carriers, if the carriers co-operate. They illustrate what an intelligent professional government employee, unhampered by partisan considerations can accomplish.

May his example furnish more of them!

THE TASK AHEAD

THERE is an old adage that "well begun is half done." There can be no better beginning of a task than a clear comprehension of what we are up against. Hence, it is well in application of the NRA to visualize what must be done if we are to enjoy any considerable period of returning prosperity within the general framework of capitalistic society.

Waving aside other incidental matters, the immediate and direct cause of the business collapse in 1929 was the inability of the mass of American farmers, workers and salaried persons to buy the products of American industry. It was not so much excess production as under consumption. In very few, if any, lines of production did we turn out as many commodities as easily could have been used by the American population had it been able to maintain a passably high standard of living.

The total income of these classes—the approximately 99 per cent of American consumers—did not rise as rapidly as prices and profits. The proportion of the national income going to this overwhelming majority of the American population was less in 1929 than in 1919. During the last prosperous year we manufactured an excess of approximately \$17,000,000,000 worth of goods which our people could not buy with their existing income, and there was little hope of selling this excess abroad.

The NRA must reverse this picture. It must see to it that the masses get enough income to buy effectively. All other considerations in the problem of industrial recovery are incidental. If capitalism can not insure this it might as well fold up. Indeed, it will do so speedily.

Just what must we accomplish to bring about the desired results? It has been stated that we must produce a return to the mass income of 1929. Just exactly what does this mean? It means that the total pay rolls in manufacturing industry must be raised 135 per cent and farm wages more than 102 per cent. The decline of income to workers in other industries also has been appalling. The pay roll losses in bituminous mining were 68

per cent; in metalliferous mining, 83 per cent; in quarrying and non-metallic mining, 75 per cent; in the production of petroleum, 59 per cent, and in canning and preserving industries, 49 per cent.

This is staggering enough. But we must remember that the 1929 mass income was not sufficient to provide adequate purchasing power and to preserve prosperity in terms of 1929 prices. Especially was this true of the farmers. Either income must be raised above the 1929 level or prices must be kept down considerably below that level. It is said to be the government's aim to give us a 1929 income and a 1926 price level. Nothing less than this would perpetuate prosperity even for a brief period.

RELIEF MUST COME

THERE is precious little sense in worrying about the demand for inflation unless we also are willing to worry about the things that caused the demand.

That we are going to have something like a final, definite showdown in inflation this winter is becoming obvious. The pressure for inflation that has been put on the White House in the last month or so is only the first breath of a gale that will break loose when congress convenes.

And to read some of the indignant outcries being raised these days is to get the impression that demanding inflation is a crime against nature. We are reminded over and over again of the doleful things that happened to Russia and Germany when they sent their paper up in the windstorm.

Stick a pin through your newspaper at random and you are likely to impale an interview with some economist or other full of dark prophecies and dire forebodings.

All this pessimism may be entirely justified.

That, at the moment, is hardly the point. The important thing is to realize that the clamor for inflation does not arise from sheer human perversity and wrongheadedness, but from the contemplation of wrongs which a great many people have decided they are not going to endure any longer.

If you borrow a dollar which is worth one bushel of wheat and find, when you come to pay it back, that it is worth three bushels, you have been gyped and no fine talk about the sanctity of sound money is going to make you feel any better about it.

It is precisely that which has happened to millions of Americans in the last few years. Debt has turned into a self-increasing snowball, and it has become a load which is just too heavy to be carried any farther.

Paying for a dead horse is never much fun; when the corpse goes on rising in value before you can get all your payments in, you hardly can be blamed if you decide that the rules of the game ought to be changed a little.

Inflation may be the height of folly. But an even loftier peak would be to fight against inflation without offering any remedy for the wrongs which have made inflation look desirable.

If we are not going to have inflation we must have something that will whittle our debts down to the size they were when we contracted them.

And it must be something that will work.

THE WAY TO RECOVERY

AN idea of the possibilities for American industry, which are inherent in the present effort to increase the purchasing power of the wage-earner, can be gained from Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins' recent address to the American Federation of Labor convention.

Some can't see any further than self, So their interest ought to be first and last;

But like may be found back on shelf,

And finally see that the show just passed.

If it is a failure we'll sink together, But if success it means prosperity of all;

If United job 'll be light as feather, If it's our duty to grant Pres' dent's call.

Some may think they are just too big,

And they don't want to help our Uncle Sam;

But later might dance a different jig,

Then find themselves in just terrible jam.

This is a time to jump into big race,

For we are now traveling on upward grade;

We should help President to set pace Which will be fine to get back our trade.

If we use judgment like making money,

We will see that this is the proper time;

If we refuse it will not be so funny, So follow good advice told in this rhyme.

By John C. Kirch.

I see by all the public press reports that we are about to be relieved of one of the most outrageous

systems ever forced upon the taxpaying public and our hungry poor.

Ultimately, we shall accept the settlement or one approximating it, because we can't do anything else. Afterward, we shall try to justify it by all kinds of spurious arguments. We shall have little difficulty in convincing ourselves or posterity that it was unavoidable. You can't get blood out of turnips, though the civilized world has been trying to make itself believe you could ever since the war ended.

This is the most stupendous default in human history, and we should waste no time attempting to deceive ourselves with regard to its true significance because there is every prospect that it will be peacefully arranged.

At no time since civilization began has any government openly made the proposition to reduce its debt by nearly \$4,000,000,000. And that isn't the worst of it. Every one of the fourteen governments that owe us is going to follow England's example. In all likelihood, the default will run close to \$10,000,000,000.

Every conceivable effort will be made to avoid the words default, repudiation and insolvency, but that might as well be written off as just one more phase of the quibbling by which civilization has tried to save its face since it went bankrupt.

Statesmen and financiers really imagined that, by some hook or crook, a smashed industrial system could take on the burden with 20,000,000 cripples to support, 10,000,000 young men in their graves and an incalculable amount of buildings, ships and machinery destroyed.

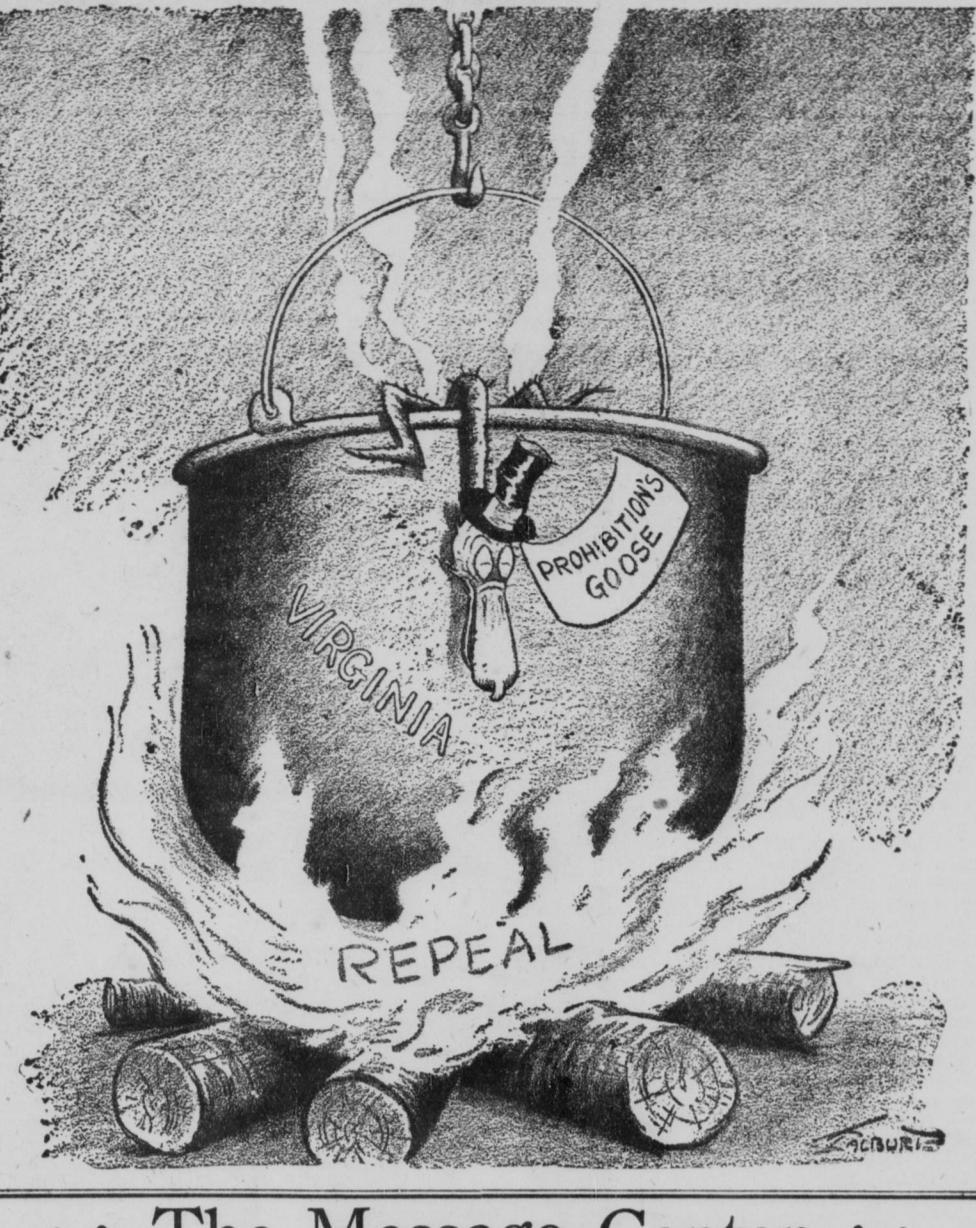
These delusions accounts for the depression we are in and the boom which preceded it. We have been dealing with paper values ever since the treaty of Versailles was signed, with fictitious securities and preposterous suppositions. That and that alone explains why forty countries have been pushed off the gold standard, why currencies have been depreciated and why governments have reduced or repudiated their debts by every known method.

The most amazing feature of this whole miserable business is the simple fact that our supposed leaders do not seem to have had the slightest conception of the economic morass into which western civilization had been plunged.

They seem to have emerged from the war without the slightest idea of the havoc it had wrought on us. But even now, when so many homes are arsenals and so many of our best people go armed

Proper Sitting Posture Stressed

Some More Old Southern Cooking!



The Message Center

I wholly disapprove of what you say and will defend to the death your right to say it.—Voltaire

Food for Thought

By J. A. L.

The NRA is certainly a step in the right direction, but I do not believe it contains all that it should.

Loyalty