

CHAPTER III
MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY CONDITIONS IN AMERICA
With Emphasis on Problems of its
INDUSTRIALIZED, URBAN SOCIETY

"We live in something less than a perfect world". Deems Taylor

A century has now passed since the general period I have described and credited for its many virtues -- virtues that might well grace any age -- with full realization of its many hardships. Over that century, we here have certainly done our part to exemplify that great change, known as the INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, defined by Webster as "The change following and resulting from the introduction of power-driven machinery to replace hand labor, occurring in England after 1760." By 1850 our manufacturing and transportation methods had gone far, stimulated by imported English ideas and our own Yankee ingenuity and vast natural resources, coupled with the relative freedom of Americans to enjoy the fruits of their labors. I have listed in Chapter I an impressive number of great advances that I have myself seen developed to perfection, indicative of our recent progress. The following statements must also be made:

WE HAVE BECOME LARGELY URBANIZED IN OUR LIVING.
WE HAVE BECOME ALMOST COMPLETELY SPECIALIZED IN OUR WORK.
WE ACQUIRE BY EXCHANGE PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING WE CONSUME.

The generally supposed effect of progress and change is the improvement in the conditions of human living.

However, I submit that conditions today fall far short of a full realization of the hopes we might have held for progress during the early stages of our advances. Life in our age is a complex of progress and poverty; of great accomplishments and acute problems; the attainment of leisure, boredom, and psychological tensions; abundance of educational material and public ignorance and apathy; the conquest of many diseases and the resurgence of others; the luxurious apartments of the rich a few blocks from the slums of the poor; the possibility of peace and plenty and the technical perfection and morbid fear of war and desolation. These paradoxes are unbecoming a nation and people of our resources and ideals. They should constitute a great challenge to all forward-looking people.

We must first seek a balanced and analytical picture of what gains and losses the past century has actually brought us.

It is easy to appreciate the credit side, for we have but to look about us to see our wealth of material accomplishments -- in

the glittering salesrooms, supermarkets, department stores, mail-order catalogues, magazine advertisements and many of our homes. These are the wares of a progressive, productive society, probably not found elsewhere in the world nor dreamed of by Kings in their greatest days. Look at our means of transportation and commerce by rail, highway, sea, and air; our social and cultural institutions -- hospitals, schools, universities, churches, libraries and printed publications, for every conceivable purpose and subject; and our learned professions and organizations. These are the elements of an advanced society, essentially cooperative in nature, however competitive in form.

Indeed it is true: we have the knowledge and the capacity to produce all things for everyone that anyone could possibly need. The battle with Nature is won.

But that is only one side.

We must look at the other. The losses and failures and injustices that have accompanied material progress are intangible and hard to describe, afflicting most directly the less articulate members and levels of society. Yet they infest all levels. We cannot securely remain permanently half rich, without challenge or social purpose, and half poor, without hope of opportunity for honest success.

The lives of many of us may have gone smoothly until now, yet even for us a sinister presence lurks in the shadows of life: MURPHY'S LAW -- "What can go wrong will go wrong."

Self-preservation -- even if human brotherhood and common decency were not enough - should prompt those of us who can to face, study, and help solve our country's most pressing problems of economics and justice. And how well we do this, here at home, will affect our influence abroad, where we like to think we have something of leadership to offer to the heretofore downtrodden millions of emerging peoples who believe their day is at hand, but who are all too well represented by Markham's

MAN WITH THE HOE

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world...
O masters, lords, and rulers of all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?

As rebellions come -- and they are here! -- will those of the type

of "this man" become merely the tools of revolutionary demagogues, or will there be any real and constructive statesmanship to which they might respond? And will America have set its own house in order, to stand as a constructive, compelling example of what freedom, equality and sound economics can do?

The most outstanding of our own problems, as I see them, I will outline in this chapter. (What I urge as the basis for the solution of such problems, which I think of as the establishment of public and private rights, will be taken up in Chapter VIII.)

UNEMPLOYMENT

In spite of our ever-expanding economy and broad and varied natural opportunities, there is a chronic failure of many people to find remunerative employment with tolerable living conditions. This is a fact of such long standing, one to which we have become so completely conditioned in our minds, that I state it as a rule of my own that

Peoples' thoughts on all economic questions are influenced, more than in any other way, by the belief that there is not enough employment for all.

Officials in government, members of unions, housewives, those in the academic world, and the "man in the street" seem all alike in accepting unemployment as a fixed factor in life.

The number of people officially listed as unemployed will vary from 1,000,000 to 10,000,000. That the figures are "official" is all you can say of them, for, as long as public relief in its many forms tends to alleviate the consequences of not finding employment or of not trying to do something for one's self, we shall never know how many listed cases are unavoidable.

However, as long as peoples' wants are not fully satisfied in a country as blessed by Nature as this one is, there can only be some artificial factor in the world of man-made customs to account for anyone's not finding some opportunity to do something useful, for others or himself in his own self-support.

It is true that rapid technological change -- of which automation is the epitome -- is increasing the proportion of jobs requiring greater education and training than ever before, and decreasing the proportion of jobs without such requirements -- those jobs easiest to prepare for. This is tending to render obsolete the skills and knowledge of many men of such an age as find it difficult to acquire new abilities. And it is helping to accelerate the powerful tendency, on the part of the whole population, toward migration -- after a century and a half of sojourn in the rural, low-rent areas of partially self-sufficient living -- to the growing, populous suburbs and cities, the areas of high rent and inflated building costs, and of crowded, often strange-feeling environments. These are hard facts for those being forced to uproot themselves, and for those left stranded in areas and age groups outside the path of modern progress.

POVERTY

This is the outcome of ignorance, lack of intelligence and ambition, the systematic exactions of monopoly, privilege, and taxation, as well as of unemployment, disease, and other misfortunes.

The poverty-stricken condition of a large share of the population in most countries has of course existed in all ages, but it is especially paradoxical here, in view of our wide natural opportunities.

It is hard to estimate poverty. None will die in this country from such degrees of malnutrition as are known in southeast Asia and South America today. In those regions, illustrative of the principles of poverty everywhere, concentration of land ownership in the hands of a privileged few; archaic and unjust laws and traditions governing a predominantly agricultural, share-cropping, soil-depleting population cursed by ignorance, superstition, excessive procreation, immobility, and lack of alternative, competing opportunity; lack of capital and of a varied industrial development oriented to local, consumer needs -- all these and similar elements of general primeval backwardness, partly due to colonialism, characterize life there.

In our country, some of the same principles can be seen at work, but with many differences of course. Our industrial development is of such a nature, extent and rapidity as to crowd too many into cities and slums and the confines of business conformity, leaving many personal talents and geographical areas stranded. We have much "social legislation" so-called, as a partial, alleged relief from the effects of poverty, but the state of health of economic society attained by such compensatory measures is not so much like that of a man bursting with joy and energy as it is like that of one being just kept alive by special, restricted diets, kept comfortable by pain killers, and kept on the track by psychiatrists.

An over-intensified competitiveness in American life is one cause of poverty, as well as of allied ills of business. The right to make as good a product as you can and put it on the market is a good and vital part of free enterprise. But under conditions of restricted access to natural opportunity (whose causes will be taken up in Chapter VII) competition often takes the form of hoggish, industrial warfare and pillage, some units trying to put others out of business and to monopolize the market. This tends to discredit normal competition, a natural, beneficial, and important element of freedom and progress, thus giving the socialistically inclined the false impression that competition is, in itself, an evil, giving the field to a few glants of industry among which the poor and modest have no chance, reducing any possible mutual concern and harmonious, democratic relationships between labor and management.

Accelerated modernization is today almost universally urged as a cure for poverty and business depression. This might possibly lead to some better conditions, and does indeed lead to greater production. And yet this has already brought overproduction and chronic stagnation to all mechanized fields of industry and agriculture; just a glance at our economy is enough to see that not low production of wealth but its bad distribution is a cause of poverty.

A generation or more ago there used to be hot arguments between economists and labor and other lay people as to whether labor-saving machines displaced men and so led to unemployment and poverty. When the air had cleared and new products had taken up the slack it would appear that the economists had been right, having taken a longer view of history.

But today, times have changed. Even socialists appear superficially vindicated; they have always said that employers would not pay laborers enough to buy back the products of industry -- hence the glutted home market and the search for foreign outlets -- concluding that the whole institution of private employers should be replaced by state management, which, being a public agency, would of course act justly and wisely in the interests of all society in the distribution of wealth. What has actually come to pass is that access to natural opportunity to produce (See Chapter VII) is now so badly distributed that many have no chance to produce anything to put into the channels of exchange, and so can buy nothing, and are therefore poor. Monopoly of natural resources and productive technological sophistication have simply relegated many to the sidelines. Yet they are human beings and have to eat. You can see how such abstract concepts as Economic Growth and Gross National Product, so highly regarded by our "advisors", can mean nothing to those destined to be left out, unless possibly to strengthen their cynical conviction that the world owes them a living, and, with its great wealth, could easily give it to them. What wonder that such people are discouraged and appear almost congenitally indolent. (A good piece of reference reading on this class of people is to be found in the Saturday Evening Post, December 21, 1963, entitled, THE INVISIBLE AMERICANS.)

Whose condition is most to be pitied -- that of the civilized, industrialized, urbanized, dependent employee, or that of the primitive, free savage, foraging in the wilderness -- has long been argued. Civilization has not yet won a clean-cut decision, complete on every count. One fact is certain in either case: both men -- the former for many generations, the latter in recent years -- live within sight of reasonable ease and plenty which they may never attain, adding to discontent and possible revolutionary explosiveness. But in a country of our area, resources, and ideals, poverty in any form is unnatural and unjustified.

BUSINESS DEPRESSION

This is the extension of the phenomenon of unemployment and poverty occurring when their effects reach up into the wheels of production and commerce, and slow their activity.

If some good chart of American business activity, such as that published by The Cleveland Trust Co., shown in part on the next page, is consulted, it will be seen that over the past 170 years of our history the variations, above and below the general trend, have been extreme, reaching 51% below normal in 1932 and 1933, and 43% above normal in 1943. Though some variations, such as that during the second world war, can be accounted for by economists, yet many cannot be, in spite of long study and continued theorizing on the causes of the "business cycle."

Whatever the progress of that study has recently been, and regardless of current conclusions, it is obviously strange -- and a definite problem for us in this study -- that employment, production, and commerce should tend at some times to slow way down and at others to speed way up in spite of the fact that peoples' needs and desires, the satisfaction of which is the whole purpose of all economic endeavor, do not fluctuate in any such extreme manner as to correspond to the charts of business activity. The individual is geared, more and more rigidly through his working and living conditions, to the interdependent economy, with little power within himself to adjust to the extremes of the business cycle.

THE FAILURE OF FARMING

This heading may seem strange at first, in view of the ability of our agriculture to produce all we can consume or export economically and a large surplus besides. I refer to the passing of a former way of life that supported people as well as raising crops and that afforded some measure of security -- a small scale, family type enterprise in which an indefinite number might engage in conjunction with other part-time activities appropriate to rural regions. Some are so continuing, but with a strength of character becoming rarer in each generation. Nor is farming a base to which a man might return, to create his own job by independent access to land, after his employment in the enterprises of others had failed to remunerate or satisfy him.

The investments required for agriculture are out of all proportion to those required for other endeavors yielding equal return. Using dairying as an example, it now takes a minimum investment of \$40,000 to \$60,000 in land, buildings, stock, and equipment to support one average family, and around \$20,000 additional for an additional hired hand's support -- all this in addition to many varied personal powers and usually some special training in college. (That additional hired hand is often considered in an economically less hazardous position than the employer's) Now, to get an equally remunerative job in, say, a machine tool works, little more than an investment of \$100 to \$300 in small tools and a year's training or less are required.

In competitive agriculture of all kinds, increasingly the dominant form today, large amounts of the best lands and of modern machinery are necessary to survive in the struggle. We have moved toward a condition of fewer and fewer people on fewer but larger farms which produced first, all we could consume, and now, much more. This will tend to enrich those with the best and largest lands, the only lands on which the most efficient machines and methods can be used. This is the type of production most responsible for creating the great surpluses which have a tendency to drive prices down, to put out of business all those with poorer lands, and to divest of population the rural towns and countryside. Where this last outcome appears not to have occurred, it will often be found that farmers are being subsidized in some manner by the taxpayers and hence are not on a firm economic basis.

Every member of a farm family, when working together, under fair circumstances, tended to develop many skills, much patience, resourcefulness, physical strength, resistance to weather, and other powers simply because in the country they had to do things for themselves in the constant battle with Nature, meeting an ever-changing challenge and a training in discipline not to be found in steam-heated city apartments, sidewalks, underground "runways", canned and commercialized food, entertainment and thought, and a simplified, routine, indoor job.

This reduction of farming to the status of a completely competitive agriculture is, under present laws and conditions, one of the greatest tragedies of the age -- for young people and old, for farmers in the country, and for workers in cities whose overall economic circumstances tend to be, by natural economic law, a function of circumstances attainable by those in independent pursuits at or near the marginal lands.

In our college class on structural engineering of steel railroad bridges, one skeptical student, pretty well speaking the common mind, said, "I am not sure I would want to ride over my design on a hand-car". Assured he did not stand alone, he then uttered the popular assurance of a basic minimum security: "Well, anyhow, if we fail in engineering we can always dig ditches!" We agreed, for little did we know that, just as in farming, this work would soon be done by machinery!

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The true functions of government, in any society properly based on free enterprise, as we wish ours to be, are relatively few in number, such as managing the services that a society can render to itself by collective action better than could be done by private competitors; the keeping of order; and the protection of public and private rights, persons, and property. As an example and symbol of legitimate government service, let us consider the case of two policemen who can appropriately serve the public at a busy street intersection in a great city. One of them might stay

out in the center, directing traffic; the other might stay on the sidewalk, standing guard for the sake of general order and protection of the rights of merchants and pedestrians, and the periodic emptying of the parking meters. On some rare occasion it might be all right for him to carry an old lady across a puddle of water; to tie a child's shoe strings; to give a beggar a dime for a cup of coffee; or to help a truck driver carry a crate into a store. But it would be a distinct misconception of public and private duties for the old lady, the children, the beggar, or the trucking company to count on such assistance regularly, interrupting the policeman's rightful duties, destroying their own self reliance.

However, pursuing a misconception exactly similar to that just mentioned, but on a vast scale encompassing practically all business and society, we have turned to government on all levels for the solution of the problems of private citizens -- unemployment, poverty, and business depression -- and others to follow.

Government relief might have been, originally, the natural reaction of a humane society toward those of its members suffering from causes beyond their control. But it has become a problem in itself.

Relief is a tax burden to those still able to stand on their own feet.

Relief tends to reduce the determination of its recipients to stand on their own feet and search diligently for work. Facing the choice of either taking a job at a modest wage or of going on relief, one is sure to realize that by following the former alternative he would be working only for the difference between that wage and possible relief payments. Perhaps the most astonishing opinion on this comes from the academic world: we are such an AFFLUENT SOCIETY that we can safely offer federally-administered, sales-tax-supported unemployment compensation of practically unlimited duration on a scale of payments closely approaching average wages! The proponent's faith in the incorruptibility of poor humans under any such plan is simply unfounded. We could be far better guided by the late Dorothy Dix, who said

"WHEN A MAN MARRIES A WOMAN WITH MONEY
HIS WORKING DAYS ARE OVER."

Giving relief alleviates the effects of unfortunate conditions, thus reducing society's determination to find and cure the causes.

Relief is a great boon to politicians. They compete in the game of ROBINHOODISM to see who can seem most generous (with taxpayers' money) in grandiose schemes of "made work" and subsidies appealing to depressed groups or areas with political influence.

Defense and space exploration are projects cut to the very pattern of a politician's dream. All the research, construction, testing, manufacturing and manning of equipment for these two activities, with all their vast ramifications, could sop up every idle man and

hungry, aggressive business organization in our country, and appeal to the circus-going propensities of the common people.

As for defense, with the world divided as it is into two opposed camps, I do not say that we do not need adequate provision for that; but I do say that as long as defense has such extraneous relief and political purposes, we shall never know just what form or amount of defense we actually need, nor how much it should cost, nor can we hope for a maximum, dedicated effort toward possible disarmament.

As for space exploration, its proponents claim that in thus searching outside the world an inestimable amount of valuable new scientific knowledge may be discovered. Considering world and domestic conditions, I say that view is frivolous, a "fiddling while Rome burns," and an unauthorized use of my tax money. The pressing problems which, if unsolved, threaten to destroy our ideals and way of life, if not indeed life itself, are not in the field of material science. They are in the field of human relations and the matters regarding Man's basic connection with Mother Earth, the source of all his substance, the area to which he is confined for life. It is here that the knowledge Man desperately needs for his immediate salvation is to be found, not in the remote reaches of outer space. I am not overlooking the efforts of some to liken space exploration to the successful voyage of Columbus in 1492. If you will consider the intellectual and physical needs of society of that day, the simplicity and economy of Columbus's proposition and its execution, and the logic and timeliness of his hypothesis, I think you should see that his success and its meaning for the world does not constitute a valid criterion by which to judge the expenditure of the peoples' resources of all kinds, so badly needed for life and its already well-known problems here on earth, now being lavished for purposes and results of unknown potentialities.

I am not belittling the technical accomplishments of space scientists; I marvel at what they can do. I merely claim there are real, desperate needs elsewhere into which the peoples' time, attention, and substance should be going. Suppose, as an example -- however politically impossible it is -- that the equivalent of all funds now spent on empty space were never collected by the federal government but left in the hands of the taxpayers and then by them given directly to local school districts for space, classroom space! I say this would do more for the security of America's future than accurate determinations of the carbon monoxide in the atmosphere of Mars or intimate photographs of the Moon's back side.

We know what an all-out attack is now being made on every frontier of the physical sciences, probing heaven and earth, whose timeliness and necessity it would be blasphemy to question. Considering the ideological warfare that has largely sparked this sort of progress, I see about it an essential hollowness and futility, best expressed by the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Corinthians:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as a tinkling cymbal or a sounding brass. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."

Political administrations, fearing nothing so much as public unrest and depression, try to minimize any current depression that may have arisen during their incumbency, taking the position, but lacking the forthright honesty, of the country preacher, who, speaking at the funeral of a very bad man, said:

"We hopes our brother has gone where he knows he ain't."

To many leaders of thought and action, Nature's laws are not something to be understood and adjusted to, but rather something to be overcome by improvised means. One of my clients, generating his own electric power on a mountain stream, was not satisfied with what water Nature provided nor with its perverse tendency to run immediately downhill; regardless of cost, he had to install expensive means for pumping it back uphill. Of course there was no special harm in this case; he did it as a stunt using only his own money. But when the same sort of thing is done in public affairs, it is not the practice of economics, ethics, or statesmanship.

The overall effect of the multifarious measures of government relief, compensation, subsidization, made work, business stimulation and adjustment, has not been to put any persons, business organizations or industries back on a firm, economic basis of self-reliance, but has merely been to hold in uneasy abeyance some of the worst effects of underlying faults in the economy. It has prevented the economy from adjusting itself by the free action of the laws of supply and demand. This is somewhat like Man's disturbing the delicate balance of biological nature. You might exterminate some particular insect pest; this would allow the uncontrolled multiplication of other insects on which the first formerly preyed. Killing these would then allow the increase of a third type on which the second had preyed. And so on The measures needed for trying to control Nature -- rather than for adjusting to her laws -- would be endless, and are proving so.

All the productive forces of society are constantly impinged upon by the incessant confusion resulting from the clashes of Natural Law with the enactments of government administrators who refuse to see that, with people allowed all their natural rights, the economy would be self-regulating and need no stimulation from them.

The way our government has attempted to combat some of our great economic maladjustments is well illustrated by one of our greatest national dilemmas, described next.

THE FARM PROBLEM

The progress of agriculture, described earlier, worked such hardship on so many people that government agencies undertook to administer programs of acreage reduction and price supports. Farmers would agree to take out of production a certain percent of acreage usually cultivated, while the government would agree to buy up, at a fixed support price, whatever surpluses resulted from crops produced on the acres remaining in use.

But this has not worked.

On any given farm, the agreed-upon percentage of area to be taken out of production could be selected from the least productive acres, while technological progress could step up production on the remaining acres kept in use. The support prices, at which various surplus commodities are bought up by the government and stored, have caused those farmers, who have sufficiently high quality land and capital to make a profit at such prices, to produce all they can and dispose of it in that way, some being greatly enriched by so doing, but those with poorer lands, worked with unavoidably less efficient equipment at higher costs, who cannot at least break even at such prices, tend to be put out of business.

Here is an illustration of how such programs have stimulated over-production: At a time when I knew the market was over-supplied, I asked a friend who, with excellent land and equipment, regularly raised from 50,000 to 70,000 bushels of potatoes, how long he intended to continue. He said, "Just as long as the government pays me to do so."

The Second World War enabled our government to reduce agricultural surpluses accumulated up to that time by selling them to our allies. A repetition of such a happy solution is probably not to be hoped for. The surpluses and costs of storage have continued to grow into one of our greatest national scandals and burdens.

I think it evident that the federal government's monkeying with agriculture has not been a success. It has not saved those farmers who were working on land that was below the break-even point in quality of natural opportunity with usual support prices. It has not spared the consumers. It has not spared the taxpayers. It has not solved the problems of the landless, transient, agricultural workers of the west nor the sharecroppers of the south. However, it has undoubtedly enriched those owners of the best lands -- lands on which, for the sake of pure economic efficiency, the government would favor all farming being done.

How can it possibly be doubted that those who have profited by such programs now in operation have used political influence to perpetuate them, regardless of the disastrous consequences to the economy as a whole?

The government has, I am told, advised those with lands unprofitable to use under present conditions, to give up, and go into other work.

That is sound advice, of course -- that is, if nothing is to be done to create equality of opportunity in the use of farm land, or any other lands. But just to let it go at that is an injustice, tending to make farming a special privilege favoring those with the best lands, excluding all others from an equal chance.

Some inequality in the wealth and status of various farmers is due to differences in personal efficiency, and to be expected, and is not a cause for any justifiable complaint.

But, that part of the difference in such status of farmers which is due to inequality of opportunity, in the use of all grades of land necessarily brought into use to produce total crops equal to the demand, is unjust.

The correction of such inequalities in the use of agricultural lands -- and the principles will apply to uses of all lands for all purposes -- is the duty of government as a part of its maintenance of all human rights.

In the hearts of Americans today there is a deep and understandable sympathy for the real farmer, especially the small farmer who, as a class, is, under present conditions and forces, disappearing. I share that sympathy most acutely; many such men are my friends, and I live where all farms are relatively small. I hate to think what the countryside will look like and what the content of rural society will miss when all small farms are gone, and what the economy will lose of bargaining power for all people employed in rural and urban pursuits. Nevertheless, I do not believe in subsidizing any parts of the economy at the expense of others; every segment of the economy should be self-supporting to justify its existence. What we must do is to divest all farmers everywhere of all special privileges and supports, at the same time relieving them of all unfair burdens and unreasonable regulations, treating them as described in Chapters VIII and IX. We may very likely then find that the small and medium farms, with their good soil economically worked with modern medium equipment and methods, and with their proximity to markets and centers of trade, population, and culture, will reward farmers in an all-round way with the ultimate objects of all human endeavor, just as well as could the flat, prairie-type farmlands, where machines, absentee land-ownership and transient, rootless, dependent menials are replacing men, women, children, and communities. (Even as far back as 1926, the family of one of my college girl-friends had a 1000-acre wheat farm in North Dakota, reaped by a transient, "industrial army", so-to-speak -- the type of farm help recommended by Marx! See Appendix C, 1. Her family, especially the women and girls, chose to spend autumn, and just as much of the rest of the year as possible, in a medium city in Maryland, for education, culture, and ordinary social and community life---the very objectives for which we live!) (See additional material along this line--- Chapter IX, Effect on the Farmer, third and fourth paragraphs.)

The constant setting up of additional government agencies to care for all the ills of society, without doing anything to eliminate the causes of these ills, and the assumption of economic functions that rightly belong to the field of private enterprise, have been endless. These are in large measure the cause of another of our great burdens and problems, to be described next.

THE OVERGROWTH OF GOVERNMENT

This is a heavy drain on the taxpayers. It is an increasing disturbance of the free and natural action of the market in governing the economy, always creating the need for further agencies to deal with the disjointed results.

The size of some of these departments of government, and the requirements of paper work and intercommunications within and among them, have grown so great as to greatly reduce their efficiency and effectiveness in performing their functions, whether those functions are sensible or not. For a striking view of such a department, I refer all readers to Mr. Stewart Alsop's revealing article, entitled "The Trouble with the State Department", in the Saturday Evening Post of March 3, 1962. After reading that, one cannot help wondering what revelations Mr. Alsop might give us, were he to take a similar look into the Pentagon, the Department of Agriculture, and others, or into the governments of states and big cities. For further evidence of how false pride, jealousy, autonomy, stupidity, and ignorance can at times render a government department perhaps worse than useless, see "The Crisis We Could Have Avoided" (in Panama) by C. W. Hall, Reader's Digest, April, 1964.

We must realize that, to large governments, the dealing with any problem is a perpetual function, a reason for being, not an objective to be accomplished. It is the nature of such governments to so increase in size, complexity, scope of activities, impersonality, and autonomy as finally to tend to bear to the population as a whole a parasitic relationship; to be an increasing burden to productive society; to yield to great pressures of those with political power; to be more and more powerless to deal appropriately and helpfully with individuals and their special needs and conditions. This is no criticism of the many honest servants of government. I merely mean to indicate how size and power tend to separate a government from its constituents. Those in high office do not have time even to see the individual; those in low office have no authority to deal with him. At best, the individual -- or the small group or community -- can be treated only according to massive rules formulated for mass situations.

The costs of government projects and administration stagger the imagination. To attain high positions, men must usually be already accustomed to real money. Then, working with similar associates and with none of the restraints one feels while spending his own money, and seeing the wealth of the people concentrated in great streams pouring into the capitals and reckoned in astronomic figures

handled by machines -- what wonder that men's sense of economy, reality, or conscience (if they originally had any) tends to vanish as they glimpse the golden opportunity to render an infinite number of ingratiating services to the people!

But government cannot render any service to people or local communities until they have first served it. It cannot give them anything, such as financial aid, without first taking money away from them and subtracting administrative costs and other losses. Such services as financing our old age, ill health, education, housing, and urban upkeep are rightly personal or local responsibilities which could far more efficiently and democratically be met directly by the parties actually and intimately concerned, if personal and local financial resources were not steadily drained from them year after year after year by the high levels of government to which personal and local matters are largely of political interest only.

As a "comic-relief break" in this long description of our problems, I submit the following, mildly relevant tale of a stop-gap measure:

EDWARD R. HEWITT, in his "Memoirs of the Spoke and Sprocket Days,"* wrote:

"When the pneumatic-tired, steam-driven Locomobile was first placed on the market in 1899, I was among the first to buy one. The flue gases came up through the boiler and passed out through louvres in the sides of the car near the back. Flames used to come out the side outlets of the fire box, especially on windy days, and to overcome this difficulty I had two small smokestacks made and fitted them over the outlets. The car was better with these, but it was not perfect."

Describing a night's ride of five miles home from Old Westbury to Garden City, Long Island, crossing the Hempstead Plains, Mr. Hewitt wrote:

"The wind seemed to increase the boiler draft and I tried to turn down the gasoline flame before anything happened, but the mechanism failed to function and flames began to come out the openings in the sides of the car, a great show in the dark. I called to Mrs. Hewitt to jump, which she did nimbly enough. I managed to shut off the gasoline flame, scorching my hair only slightly in the process. Presently I got the flame regulated, and we set off again. We reached home without further trouble. It was after this adventure that I constructed the two smokestacks, which, while they did not entirely keep the flames from shooting out, made it considerably safer to drive the car in a wind."

Safer, perhaps, yet not fully satisfactory, as events proved, when on the way to a big dinner party given for the Duke and Duchess of

* The New Yorker, May 16, 1942.

Marlborough visiting at Ringwood, New Jersey, as Mr. Hewitt wrote:

"...flames came out the vents once more, this time with extraordinary spirit, and set fire to the spare tire."

This, in turn, scorched the hamper containing his best trousers. These, though seeming to have suffered unnoticeably when he was dressing later, nevertheless, failed him utterly when the knees split nearly full length when he sat down, marring the composure of his conversation all during the dinner, allowing him to avoid shame before the illustrious company afterward only by his delaying his rise from the table until all others had started for the drawing rooms and by his then turning in the opposite direction and escaping through the butler's pantry.

When you contemplate the multiplicity of government bureaucracies, agencies, and programs for subsidization, adjustment, compensation, promotion, and protection, and other schemes for patching up or otherwise tinkering with the national economy in a vain effort to make it somehow work in spite of basic faults, with the costs, complications, questionable effectiveness, and loopholes for corruption inherent in these schemes, you may well recall those makeshift "smokestacks." The need of all sorts of such gadgets was later eliminated by the radical change made in the whole manner of using the power of gasoline, through internal combustion, which has proven simple, foolproof, and efficient.

Only when changes, comparable to that sort of automotive progress, through adherence to simple correct principles, are made, for bringing about a better economy and a better society, shall we make similar human progress.

THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIALISM

Though the "industrial revolution" may have been sparked by "power-driven machinery," bringing great material productivity, yet its long-time effects on the lives and personal development of people of all ages must be considered.

From being "subsistence" farmers and "jacks of all trades," producing, in a relatively independent manner and mostly for their own consumption, responsible for their own destinies, most men have now been converted to urban specialists. Each tends now to have but one skill or narrow body of knowledge; the work and world of others is increasingly abstruse and difficult to enter. While formerly one's associates were neighbors whose work and success were related to his own, now they are his competitors, his bosses or his underlings. He works for an employer whose basic interest is actually compatible with his own, though this true relationship is constantly made to appear as one of a basic opposition of interests where he -- but for the alleged beneficence of a union with his fellows -- would be exploited in an unequal struggle over the proceeds of industry.

It is true, the progress of industrial development has largely reduced the individual to a "chip on the stream," a tiny, dependent cog in a big machine which dominates him utterly but over which he

has but the slightest influence, if any. Whether this condition is better or worse where unions dominate the labor force -- ostensibly protecting his interests -- is a question. Union leadership is a business, no less self-seeking than any other. It works for gains for labor measurable in money -- a factor on which all are presumed to agree -- gains which can seem clearly attributable only to leadership's efforts. Leadership tries to draw to itself the primary loyalty or subservience of workmen, although actually men's loyalty is rightly owed to their employers who have the responsibility for the success of the business on which the men's wages and jobs depend. This is a violation of a fundamental principle of business: authority and responsibility must go together -- as "love and marriage -- they go together like a horse and carriage." To my knowledge, neither unions nor their leaders have ever worked for the general improvement of the conditions of all men, such that, for instance, men might be free of the domination of unions and employers alike. Where force intrudes in "labor relations," the true relationships between the factors of production -- land, labor, and capital -- will remain hidden, and no effort will be made toward independence, freedom, or equality of opportunity.

Were it claimed that this view is too visionary for use in immediate problems, I would reply that this is not written as a handbook of industrial relations, but as a clarification of the long-range, basic reforms we need, and for those wishing to look ahead, in the hope that we shall not forever continue "barking up the wrong tree." Any possible usefulness of unions tends to be offset by their continual failure to correctly identify the real enemy of both labor and management -- monopoly of natural opportunity -- to be taken up in Chapter VI.

Modern conditions tend to prevent a man from combining mental and physical work; we are only just beginning to realize the seriousness of this. He is being increasingly removed from the atmosphere and the beauties of unspoiled Nature, the great teacher and ameliorator, and from "the hills, from whence cometh my strength," and is increasingly confined to the tight, close, competitive atmosphere, the noise, the pressures, the tensions, and the glittering or burdensome distractions of the world of purely man-made things. These considerations may seem far afield from economics, but they are actually having as great a tangible effect on society and on individuals as do many material forces.

YOUNG PEOPLE, the citizens and directors of society tomorrow, are special victims of these conditions.

Compared to a century ago, there is now, in the home and community, in industry and in agriculture, only a small and decreasing need for the simple, immature powers of the young, by which they might easily and naturally edge into the remunerative work of the world. The very limited field of their possible employment is often further reduced by stupid and indiscriminate union restrictions and child labor laws.

In all levels of society, the typical stance of youth is, to a great extent, that of idleness. Mature people know what idleness leads to!

The decline of the home and family -- normally the basic unit of society -- leaves many children with no center to life, in which if they had it, they should feel accepted, understood, wisely guide cherished as members of a naturally close-knit, warm-hearted group, and, above all else, loved.

School and college should rightly take up much of the time of the young; it should stock and train their minds, guide their heart and elevate their tastes, arouse their consciences, and give them high senses of value. But often subject matter is ill-adapted to the ages, interest level or particular bents of the students, being aimed, instead, at preparing them for adult concerns of the far-distant, uncertain future. Preoccupation with loads of academic requirements imposed by high authority often prevents teachers from doing the many little things that might win the hearts and confidence of the young. One young man, then happily past the shoals of school and college, said to me, "I always felt the teachers were 'on the other team'." He was probably as completely unjustified in this feeling as are many others who would, thoughtlessly, say the same thing. Yet such false ideas often determine youth's attitudes just as much as if they were true. In school, children are subject to the constant, invidious comparison with others as to ability in book and paper work, yet home and society give them little background for these indirect means of learning, "spectator" diversions having crowded out good reading and any conversation worthy of the name, if indeed these were ever there. Many fail and drop out of school, and never reach or stay in college.

Kept out of work, or with no interest in it, in urban-type atmospheres of purely man-made things and "status symbols" all costing money while they can earn none of their own, the position of many young people is an uncomprehended, frustrating emptiness. Into this cultural vacuum is sure to flow similarly uninspired companionship and necessarily cheap, commercialized diversions. Poverty and neglect, or, strangely, wealth and misguided indulgence added to the cynical morality of much of society today, and plain boredom all combine to set the stage for some very strange reactions indeed. Boys in a dark street in Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love," murdered an innocent visitor to our country, a Korean college student, just to get 35 cents apiece, while a devoted young neighbor of ours set our house on fire in blind reaction to his father's having rejected him. To these we may well add the case of Louis Marsh, a devoted street worker with the New York City Youth Board, killed in January, 1963 by a gang called The Untouchables. He had successfully "cooled" a threatened gang war; they interpreted peace as a blow to their pride. These are extreme cases, yet in the aggregate, and among all classes or "brackets," indicate a confusion as to life's values unbefitting a country of such opportunity and enlightenment as we claim to have.

We could perhaps understand petty crimes of theft, based, as they might logically be among the underprivileged, on plain motives of economic gain. But much of what goes on is only simple, sadistic, irrational, unremunerative heartlessness and futile destructiveness. The brutality of many TV programs which negligent parents let children constantly watch -- the world of sex, gangsters, police chases, fights and other violent engagements, but never anything of beauty, tenderness, love, or intellectual or spiritual challenge -- these can account for irrationality to some extent, of course. All too many must pass, unguided, through the dangerous, idle period between school and work when they are "neither hay nor grass," or, like the rivers of the south in flood, "too thick to drink, too thin to plow." Perhaps sensing the conditioned anxiety of parents, and as if youth could never be precious and golden in its own right but were merely a time to pass through as painlessly and quickly as possible, one famous military academy, in school directories, covered the whole matter thus:

"You send us the boy, we will return you the man."

The Industrial Revolution, continuing in ever-unfolding stages, with the resulting, minute division of labor and the urbanization of the life and work of society, does indeed produce wealth, but at the expense of the narrowing of the powers of individuals, reducing their versatility in meeting new and varied situations. We badly need people of broad intellectual and physical powers, broad knowledge and experience, and good old-fashioned common sense. The spirit of this is inherent in a remark by Arthur E. Morgan, of Yellow Springs, Ohio, as he wrote, with regret, "The professional psychologist is taking the place of the intimate friend." Whenever a man in government has made such an exclusive career of politics -- euphemistically called "public service" -- as never to have held a practical job of constructive work or a responsible position in a productive, competitive, necessarily self-supporting enterprise, his entire attitude and judgment are liable to be naive, visionary, and utterly impractical, even though he might possibly be perfectly honest. In private life, the same is true. In college and graduate school, the Mecca of intellect and ambition, they "learn more and more about less and less."

Society's lack of wide ranges of experience, ability, and personal powers within individuals might well remind us of the story of a great disaster at sea:*

"There were times of deathly lull in the wheelhouse when everyone was away from the nerve center of the ship, carrying out the captain's orders. Captain Calamai never was at a loss giving orders, but there were only relatively few men qualified to

* "Collision Course" by Alvin Moscow.

perform the many tasks that demanded attention during the emergency. There was only one ship's carpenter who could take soundings. Only a few men were trained to use the signal lamps. It became abundantly clear during the night that the ANDREA DORIA was designed and manned as a luxury liner. It had an abundance of waiters and stewards, chefs and dishwashers, but it did not have a crew trained for multiple emergency actions."

Modern society is much like that ship and its crew.

Sufficient unto the day is this chapter on our domestic problems.

As if our own troubles were not enough, we are also afflicted by the ever-changing, potentially-violent international situation. As the life of an individual is insecure in a neighborhood of the poor, the discontented, and the desperate, so also is a nation insecure among other nations with those characteristics. It certainly is incumbent upon us to understand and help solve that great problem in which we have an undeniable share, WAR, to be taken up in the following chapter.