A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

These days we have but to mention the word "labor" and we have a problem. Brows knit in thought. "What to do about labor?" Emotions rise. "Are you for labor or against?" Laws are passed. "This law will be good—or bad—for labor."

And while discussions, emotions and laws wax—what about "labor?" It seems to have been all but forgotten that labor is the human effort necessary for producing the things we want. And in the forgetting, attitudes go awry. Some belittle "labor," contending that it should stick to its chores and "stay in its place." Others glorify it and remind us of "the dignity of labor."

Thus, in one or two easy steps, labor is stripped of human meaning and becomes an entity. The entity is given one job for one hand, another job for the other, and two more jobs for the feet. That's the schedule, and no back talk. To relieve this intolerable condition, the labor union enters. The entity now has only one job to do—a turn of a screw or a handle. Is the screw too greasy? Don't touch it, that's for the grease-wipers to do. No back talk.

And what if the entity says, "A few of us know this job pretty well now. Let's open a little shop of our own." "Insurrection!" cries organized management. "It will upset our established and efficient way of doing things." "Treason!" cries organized labor. "You want to become a capitalist."

The screw keeps turning. Independence becomes a quaint, old-fashioned virtue. Discarded is the idea that all of us are labor and that the easiest way to produce what we want is the best way. In all the debate on what is good or bad for labor, has it never occurred to anyone that it is good if we can produce the things we want with less labor? But as soon as you suggest this, it is interpreted that you want to rob the entity "labor" of its reason for existing—to work. But if we are all labor and want not work but the results of work, would it not be better to be able to produce more with less work? Would it not be better to open up opportunities rather than restrict them?

Happy will be that day when every man shall sit under his own tree with none to make him afraid—and look back on all this, and laugh.

VIEWS OF THE NEWS

By SYDNEY MAYERS

"[Freedom of the press in the U. S.] does exist to a degree of near-anarchy and irresponsibility. There is no body or agency or censor or official or law to tell a newspaper what to publish or what to leave out . . . This unhampered freedom may be good or bad." We quote this editorial gem from The Newspaper PM, champion of the people's rights.

Now empowered to open private mail carrying "suspicious" contents, Britain's Treasury Department will use X-rays and fluorescent screens to search for contraband valuables. Calmly observes The London Evening Standard: "This latest infringement of individual liberty brings the country a long way down the road to a police state."

After a special survey, the U. N. Economic Commission for Europe reports a current manpower deficit in European countries of 1,130,000 workers. We suggest introducing the commission to the International Refugee Organization, now trying desperately to settle 1,500,000 "displaced persons"—they ought to get together!

A European flight requires making out over 500 papers; a U. S.-Australia round trip calls for about 5000 sheets; an air traveler to Europe returning via South America must supply the same data 26 times; it takes 1600 pages to print our foreign air travel restrictions. Did somebody ask what's holding up aerial progress?

Thanks to continuing world-wide dollar shortages, barter transactions are steadily increasing, with ten or more nations engaging in highly successful barter-trading. Yes, as any student of "P. F. T." will brightly points out, international trade is an exchange of commodities for commodities—money or no.

Confounding critics who decry New York's neglect to provide much-needed housing, our fair city's authorities are planning a new $6,600,000 structure, sufficient for 800 tenants. But before you dash out to reserve quarters there, be advised that the proposed building is to be the new Brooklyn City Prison.

Complaining that a proposed U. S. grant of $300,000,000 would be "a drop in the bucket," China's Vice President Sun Fo declares: "I've always had a hidden suspicion that American friendship was not dependable." "This will compel China to work out its own destiny," bitterly concludes the son of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, emancipator of his country.

In a Britain-wide broadcast, the Minister for Economic Affairs urged "cheerfulness on everyone's part." A few days later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a new tax program, "designed to drain some $832,000,000 from expendable funds in the pockets of British taxpayers"—adding greatly to the cheer, no doubt.

A city plan to widen Montreal's busy Dorchester Street provides that 20 per cent of the cost will be payable pro rata on the municipal valuation of the land, without buildings, in the affected district. Oscar Boelens points out that this levy will encourage building construction, since in no other way can landowners recover the assessments they must pay.

Counsel for the National Cooperative Milk Products Federation warns that "the American farmer may be faced with competing effectively in the world market" under the new 23-nation tariff agreement, which limits subsidies and price supports. He adds the new program is an "advanced concept of free trade"; we add: "Is that bad?"

Normally we eschew the subject of politics, a dubious field of endeavor; but when political reactions are rooted in economic phenomena, we feel loath to ignore it. We wonder if the severe Labour Party setbacks in recent English, Scottish and Welsh elections reflect the results of the government's bungling Fabianism—we just wonder, that's all!

The Citizen's Public Expenditure Survey discloses that of the $9,804,089,407 contributed (?) by New York State's taxpayers to federal, state and local governments, over 76 per cent came from personal income and business taxes. Lest you feel that at least a small part of this burden might fall on land-monopolies, the survey emphasizes that it includes no "real estate" taxes—which account separately for 8.1 per cent!

Among Our Contributors

HARRY GUNNISON BROWN, Professor of Economics at Missouri University (Columbia), author and lecturer, prepared the unique Extension Division course described elsewhere in this issue. He thinks it important for students to learn to reason from cause to effect, rather than to spend much time memorizing definitions. Asked, somewhat jocularly, by Barbara Schmitz whether a man had to be a social philosopher to be an economist, he replied that "a man with a heart can be an economist." After a pause he added, "An economist could conceivably be a man with no heart if he could reason accurately from cause to effect, since then his reasoning could serve as guidance in human affairs even though he had himself no interest in the welfare of others."

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G(EORGE) R. DAVIES, sociologist and professor of statistics in the College of Commerce at the University of Iowa (Iowa City), has been for eighteen years, editor of the Iowa Business Digest in which his article here published first appeared. This monthly Digest which reaches business men and former Iowa graduates is a very human blend of business philosophy and statistics. When Editor Davies wrote his article about *America's Only Original Economist* he was not aware (as he is now) that there were any schools in which Henry George's principles were being taught. He is the author of *Social Environment, National Evolution*, and *Introduction to Economic Statistics*.

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MILDRED JENSEN LOOMIS, co-editor of the well known decentralist paper, The Interpreter, lives in Brookville, Ohio. She majored in economics in Nebraska University but did not explore *Progress and Poverty* until ten years later, at which time she became a teacher of its principles. Three years ago she published, with able assistance from Ralph Borsodi, Vol. I, No. 1 of the semi-monthly periodical which continues to interpret "current events for people concerned with the achievement of normal living." Its philosophy is based upon Belloc and Chesterton — Henry George, Jefferson, Warbasse and Virgil.

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