

Economic Highlights

Happening That Affect the Future of Every Individual—
National and International Problems Inseparable
from Local Welfare

"Britain's 13-year-old experiment in socialism, it now appears, is being written off as a failure. Private enterprise emerges stronger than ever."

Thus speaks U. S. News & World

Report in a detailed feature article. These and other such findings come from highly authoritative sources, including a parliamentary committee, industrial and management organizations and other experts. Matters have even reached the point where the Labor Party, which carried the banner of full socialism for so long, is changing its stand.

In general terms, the magazine sums up certain facts that have emerged. One is that efficiency in the nationalized industries has tended to be lower than in comparable private industries. Another is that nationalized enterprises have higher running costs, for the reason that their managers aren't under the same pressure to keep in the black as are private enterprise managers; the government picks up the tab for losses. A third is that prices in nationalized industries are kept artificially low for political reasons, bear no relationship to costs, and the result is higher taxes. And, surprising as it may seem to some, labor relations have been no better in nationalized enterprise than in private enterprise, and in certain fields they have been much worse.

As a specific example, U.S. News describes what has happened in coal, one of the basic enterprises socialized by the Labor Party between 1946 and 1951. More than a billion dollars has been poured into the mines to modernize and maintain them and the coal labor force has been increased by 11,000. Yet the mines produced less coal in 1957 than in 1951. There have been constant deficits, amounting to \$75 million over a ten-year period. And labor troubles have been rampant causing huge production losses.

On the other hand the steel industry—which was returned to private hands after a brief period of state ownership—provides what U. S. News terms "a striking contrast." Production has greatly expanded, a profit has been earned and prices have been reduced.

Topdressing Small Grains Pays Off

After grain is drilled in the fall, there is usually only one other thing a farmer can do to increase his yield. That is to apply nitrogen topdressing.

And now is the best time to apply that topdressing, said George Spain, small grain specialist for the N. C. Agricultural Extension Service. After March 15, the period for maximum yield advantage will be over.

Nitrogen topdressing of small grain can return up to \$5 for each \$1 spent for materials, Spain said. This nitrogen causes increased tillers, consequently, more heads of grain at harvest time.

Wages are high by British standards and labor relations have been excellent.

Other socialized enterprises have had a melancholy history. The Commission which operates railroads and other commercial transportation showed a \$425 million deficit in the 1947-57 period. British Overseas Airways Corporation dropped \$75 million. The government-owned cable and wireless service just managed to break even. And the deficits don't include government assistance for capital-investment programs. Meanwhile, private enterprises have been prospering, have paid their own way, have financed expansion and improvement out of earnings and by private investment, and, as a rule, give better service at lower cost.

This, in brief outline, is why socialism has produced a vast amount of expensive disillusionment in England. The effects promise to be far-reaching indeed. The U. S. News article ends: "One result is that political lines are being redrawn."

"In effect, more and better capitalism is the new campaign slogan of Britain's Labor Party. Old-fashioned socialism is quietly being ditched."

Gas Refund Being Lost

Farmers are entitled to a six cents per gallon state refund on motor fuels used during the calendar year 1958 for non-highway use. According to reliable estimates only a small percentage of the farmers are availing themselves of this refund.

The application must be made before April 15. To those farmers who have been filing, it is most important to use the form that has your name and serial number. To those farmers that have not been filing they should be careful to use their complete name and address.

News For Veterans

Services of volunteers from the community are becoming increasingly important to the welfare of sick and disabled veterans, Veterans Administration's Chief Medical Director said in Washington, D. C.

Dr. William S. Middleton said that with use of tranquilizing drugs and newer drugs for tuberculosis, and with the increasing age of veterans, there is more need for volunteers to "carry the hospital into the community."

By this, he explained, he means services of volunteers to start where VA hospitalization ends and thus give readjustment and rehabilitation of disabled veterans another dimension beyond hospital walls.

"Improvements in treatment mean that many patients get out of VA mental and tuberculosis hospitals sooner," Dr. Middleton said, "and volunteers are extending to them the helping hand they need to regain their rightful place in society."

Increasing numbers of aged patients able to leave VA hospitals also are requiring special aid from volunteers, he said.

Dr. Middleton said almost half the patients in VA hospitals are 55 years or older.

"We speak of medical care," Dr. Middleton said, "and this VA can furnish. But today there is an increasing need for another kind of care."

"I am talking about the personal things, and perhaps often the little things, that volunteers do for veterans leaving the hospital," he added.

ed, "but cumulatively these are not little."

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