

### The National Outlook Employment And Unemployment By RALPH ROBEY

It may be recalled that the employment and unemployment report for March was highly unfavorable. The explanation was bad weather over a large part of the nation in the survey week. April returned to the normal trend and revealed substantial improvement in both categories. We now have the report for May. It again shows normal seasonal changes.

Actually the April improvement in unemployment was not as great as expected. In February the seasonally adjusted unemployment was 4.8 percent of the civilian labor force. In March the figure rose to 5.4 percent. April should have erased this entire increase but it failed to do so and in that month unemployment, seasonally adjusted, still was 5 percent of the civilian labor force. In May there was a decline of 200,000 in the number of the unemployed, but the percentage of the civilian labor force unemployed dropped to only 4.9 percent.

It is not possible to be complacent about this volume of unemployment. Clearly it is higher than either necessary or desirable from both the economic and the social viewpoints. However there are some favorable elements in the picture when one examines other than the total figures.

For example the long-term unemployed, those who have been seeking work for 15 weeks and over, declined in May by 300,000,

and this brought the total of this group well below a year earlier. Secondly, nearly half of the unemployed have been seeking jobs for less than 5 weeks. Finally the average factor work-week reversed the downward trend of the past three months and rose to 39.8 hours. This was in spite of a reduction in hours of work in steel plants. As a result of this longer work-week average weekly earnings rose 91 cents to \$90.74.

On the other hand the volume of employment in factories continues to drag. It currently is well above a year ago, but the total is still 400,000 below the pre-recession level. This means that employment in manufacturing is not increasing as rapidly as production, and it appears that this probably will remain a permanent trend.

The failure of factory employment to increase as rapidly as output is largely explained by the fact that during prosperity management is less cost-minded than normal and builds a larger labor force than is necessary. With a recession management reviews its operation closely and eliminates those workers who are not essential. Ultimately, it is true, management may again become careless and build a larger labor force than it needs, but this takes time and it has not happened over-all up to the present.

The reason for thinking that manufacturing will continue to

use less labor in relation to production than heretofore is that wages have now attained a level where there is a tremendous urge to use machines rather than manpower when ever possible. Such technological unemployment does not indicate that the total number of jobs will be less. Most factories that buy machines attempt to find other spots for the displaced workers, and in many instances this is done completely. In every shop, too, there is a certain number of resignations, and this gives leeway for introducing machines without the necessity of discharging workers.

June figures will show a sharp increase in both employment and unemployment. This will be because a large number of persons get out of school and start looking for jobs. Following that there will be a month by month decline until October, for purely seasonal reasons.

Too much weight must not be put on the figures for any one month, but we must recognize that we have, and will have for a long time, a genuine problem in connection with unemployment.

### No Comment

By JAMES W. DOUTHAT  
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"NO COMMENT" is a report of incidents on the national scene and does not necessarily reflect NAM policy or position.

Washington — Conservatives in Washington continue to battle against a mass of undesirable legislation while seeking to de-

termine the possible effects of Nelson Rockefeller's attack on the Eisenhower Administration and on Vice President Nixon.

Part of the Rockefeller statement was directed at some of the hottest issues now awaiting action by Congress. His views on these issues were sharply challenged by the conservatives.

Governor Rockefeller called for (1) a \$3 billion increase in defense spending (contrary to the Eisenhower conviction that present defense spending is entirely adequate), (2) Federal aid for school construction (contrary to the opinion of those who think that this is a problem for the states and localities to solve), and (3) medical help for the aged through the present Social Security system (contrary to the views of those who think the federal government should stay out of this field).

Other Rockefeller legislative recommendations, on which no action is likely at this session of Congress, included: Revision of tax policies to encourage investment, elimination of featherbedding, and giving the President discretionary authority to use compulsory arbitration in settling economic conflicts.

There is widespread support for tax reform legislation along the lines of the Herlong-Baker bill which, among other things, would lower the personal and corporation income tax rate to a maximum of 47 percent by a series of five annual reductions. A determined effort is being made to obtain congressional approval next year.

Conservatives in Congress also would strongly support proper legislation to eliminate featherbedding.

But they are bitterly opposed to any legal requirement for compulsory arbitration. They are in complete agreement with Vice President Nixon's statement on this subject. He said:

"I have stated on several occasions that I am against compulsory arbitration of labor disputes, because I know that compulsory arbitration, from my study of this matter as a member of the labor committee of the House and from my observation of compulsory arbitration laws in operation in Australia and in certain European countries, inevitably results in wage control by government, and that means, in my opinion, a government-controlled economy."

Thus, this legislative situation makes certain that there will be strong congressional opposition on some subjects—and a degree of support (depending on details) on others—to Governor Rockefeller's efforts to have his views approved by Congress.

Meanwhile, a series of battles raged in Congress as the deadline for adjournment neared. The national political conventions start on July 11 and Congress must finish its work by that time or else reconvene later—a prospect that virtually everyone affected views with horror.

In this connection, Conservatives point out that a simple solution is available to those who are fearful that Congress cannot complete action on the mass of pending legislation in time for the conventions. The proposed solution is this:

Let all bills die which provide for budget-busting spending and boosting the size of the federal bureaucracy in Washington.

Such measures would include: Federal aid to education, federal aid for housing, medical care for the aged, increasing the minimum wage, increasing the salary of government employees, and permitting secondary boycotts in the construction industry.

By eliminating further consideration of these issues, Congress could devote its time to essential legislation and the necessary appropriation bills.

Those advocating this procedure point out that a session of Congress should never be judged on the basis of the number of bills enacted—but should be judged on the basis of the quality and essentiality of legislation approved.

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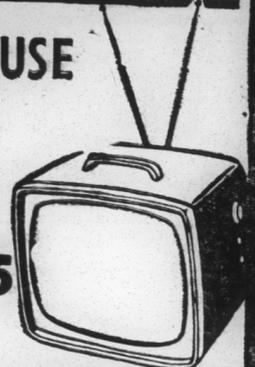
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