

GREETINGS TO LABOR

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AS WE SEE IT

of the government using its power of taxation and its power of appropriating money to create an educational fund for our children. Or, take the words of Abraham Lincoln, patron saint of the Republican party, who, I think, gave just about as good a definition of the welfare state as I know when he said that "the legitimate object of government is to do for the people what needs to be done but which they cannot by individual effort do at all, or do so well, for themselves."

Question: Do you get the impression that some of the alter prototypes of the Republican party seem to think that the government shouldn't do anything for anybody?

Cruikshank: That is right. They use this phrase, the welfare state, in a way in which it was certainly never intended. When those persons who do not want to see the American people make any progress or have their government act as Lincoln advised, they don't want to face the issues. Instead, they get some "bad" name to use for a label.

In the pages of history, for example, we find that when the use of the public lands, way back in 1830, was a major issue, and there were many people who wanted public lands to be given to small farmers, that was called "agrarianism". You couldn't call a man a worse name a hundred years ago than to call him an "agrarian." Then everything that was for the welfare of the people had this bad name hung on it. It was a way to avoid the real issues.

Question: Because the opponents of the so-called welfare state seem content mostly to just use the term without defining it, what are some of the things included in the term, welfare state?

Biemiller: Well, certainly they are still against social security. Now, for example, the House of Representatives has just brought out a new social security bill. But 10 of the Republican members of the Ways and Means Committee issued a statement against it. That bill in brief extends coverage to 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 additional people and also raises average benefits about 70 per cent. In other words, they don't want to take care of the old people in a decent manner.

Question: When you say "they" you don't mean all Republicans?

Biemiller: No, I mean those who take this reactionary point of view and holler about the welfare state. I quite agree, there are some Republicans who don't take that point of view.

Question: And there are some Democrats who oppose it as well?

Biemiller: Unfortunately, there are some. They all oppose such things as unemployment compensation and workmen's compensation. The people who oppose the welfare state really want to turn the clock back.

But they aren't really against all government control. What they don't like is to have government used for the welfare of all the people instead of for the sole benefit of the privileged few.

Cruikshank: Government aid to business interests goes a long way back. As a matter of fact, Alexander Hamilton used the welfare clause of the Constitution in his argument for the establishment of a national bank. Nobody argued that that was the welfare state and disaster was not just around the corner when he did that. Another example of the public lands that were given to the railroads. One hundred seventy-nine million acres of land, more territory than all the New England states together,

was given to the railroads as an incentive to develop the railroad system in America.

We don't oppose that kind of thing, but what we do object to is that these people who have been the recipients of a government aid and assistance for the development of business interests, raise their hands in holy horror when aid for all the people is proposed, and say this is the welfare state leading us down the road to disaster.

Question: What about the welfare state and Communism?

Biemiller: In my opinion, a true welfare state is the one definite answer to the perils of either Communism or Fascism which seek to regulate the lives of the people up and down. We want government to be used for the welfare of the people, not to run their lives.

Cruikshank: That is a very important distinction because actually some of these people who are labeling all socially progressive proposals as the welfare state, and then making that synonymous to totalitarianism are actually doing a very great disservice to our democracy and unwittingly playing right into the hands of the Communists.

Question: How do you mean?

Cruikshank: Well, they will prevent the people from using the instrumentality of government to meet the problems which they can't meet individually. If those problems are not solved, and if the people don't have access to government instrumentalities to provide security and to promote their economic welfare, chaos will result which will play right into the hands of those who would destroy us.

Question: Then you take this whole campaign these charges against the welfare state, as nothing but propaganda to mislead the people into thinking there is something wrong with legislation and government programs to promote the welfare of the people?

Biemiller: Yes, but I think that this time that the reactionaries have outwitted themselves. The American people are not going to be scared by the name welfare. After all, we are looking out for one another. It is a good religious principle, if you will, and I think that the American people are going to like the welfare state.

Question: What about former President Hoover's argument that if the government continues to appropriate large sums of money to carry on all these welfare programs, that taxes on the people, wage earners as well as the wealthy, will stifle business?

Cruikshank: Well, ex-President Hoover has apparently changed his tune. As I recall his voice years ago, it was prosperity that was just around the corner. Now it is disaster that is just around the corner.

The real point is that the people do not mind putting in contributions, for example to social security, because they are buying an annuity through a government instrumentality, to provide payments when the time for retirement comes. It is simply using a government insurance system to provide for their security and they are perfectly willing to pay for it.

Question: Are the costs of all these programs the big factor in the government budget that is causing all these high taxes?

Biemiller: Not at all. Taxes today are levied primarily for defense, for the European Aid Program, which is a form of defense, and for paying off the cost of past wars, and I think we ought to recognize that fact very frankly when we start talking about taxes.

Taft-Hartley Law After Two Years

Washington. — In the two years since the Taft-Hartley law became effective on August 22, 1947, a lot has happened to hamper and restrict union activity.

Some of the highlights of this period are brought out in the following analysis of activities of the National Labor Relations Board which appeared in the August issue of "Research Report" published by the American Federation of Labor:

1. Union Shop Elections: Before any union can bargain for any type of union security clause under the new law, it must have specific authorization through an election among the workers concerned. From August 22, 1947, to June 30, 1949, a total of 32,940 union security elections had been held with over 3,000,000 workers casting their ballots. In all but 2.6 percent of these elections, the result was a victory for the union. During this period, AFL unions won a total of 23,167 elections with a vote totaling 1,547,777.

2. Unfair Labor Practice Charges: For the first time the law authorized the filing of charges against labor unions for violation of newly enacted unfair labor practices. During the past 2 years over 2,000,000 such charges have been filed with the NLRB.

3. Injunctions: Under the new law the board's general counsel was authorized to apply for injunctions against labor unions alleged to have committed certain "unfair labor practices." During the past 2 years, the general counsel has applied for 56 injunctions of which 24 have been granted, 8 denied, 16 are still pending and 8 were withdrawn.

NEW BUSINESS ORDERS ROSE 8% IN MAY-JUNE

Washington — The Commerce Department announced that new orders placed with manufacturers picked up 8 percent in May and June, marking the "first significant break" in a downturn that began last fall.

"The rise affected nearly all industry and in some—such as cotton textiles—new orders exceeded the level of output by an appreciable margin," the report said.

That is the sort of spark for a production speed-up business men have been hoping for, but the department said that even so, "the aggregate flow of new business has remained low in relation to both output and final construction notwithstanding the recent modest advance."

Washington — Veterans may work on public school construction projects while they are training for the building trades under the G-I "Bill of Rights," under legislation approved by the House.

Existing law bars G-I students from working on other than laboratory training projects.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Labor Day Greetings

From

Senator George T. Penny

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