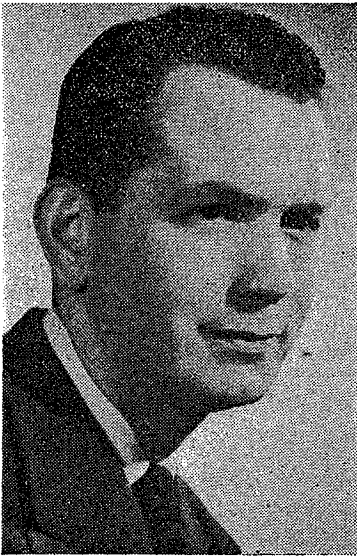


No Apple Vendors on Street Corners —At Least in 1947

By Jack Berman

The question now uppermost in the minds of Americans is "can post-war America achieve and maintain full employment?" Many



economists have tried to look into the distant future . . . not one has indicated that America will achieve and maintain full employment in the years ahead. Most see a period of high employment during the catch-up years immediately following reconversion. None

sees America continuing this high employment through the years ahead.

The Committee for Economic Development — a businessmen's committee—has attempted one of the most complete projects designed to give America, now, the answers to this all-important question. Business leaders in every major industry were canvassed and their opinions were carefully reviewed and analyzed. The result of this project, a consensus of their remarks, is contained in a pam-

phlet entitled "American Industry Looks Ahead." The following quotations are taken from this pamphlet:

"The United States has never had a substantially full employment since 1929, except in wartime.

"In the last more or less normal peacetime year, 1939, there were about 8,900,000 unemployed out of a labor force of 54,000,000, or 16.4 per cent.

"Between 1931 and 1940 the smallest percentage of unemployment to total labor force was about 13.8 per cent, in 1937.

"In wartime great scientific strides have been made, and many of these will be reflected in a sharp postwar rise in productivity, particularly in manufacturing. This situation, when it develops, will accentuate the problem that was already acute before the war: Can we consume the products of a very high level of employment when the country is at peace?"

The C. E. D. has selected 1947 as the first normal year when industry will be in full swing and employment at its peak level. The size of the labor force at this time is estimated as between 58.2 and 62 million. It is also estimated that between 2 to 4 million will be in the armed forces. Finally, there is the question of how many persons

would constitute the permissible civilian labor float; that is to say,

persons engaged in moving from job to job or otherwise unavoidably unemployed. Accordingly, our best guess gives us a total labor force of 60 million; in the armed forces, 3.5 million; a labor float of 2.5 million; a net total of persons requiring civilian jobs, 54 million.

C. E. D. says that the total number of employed civilians in 1947 may be estimated as approximately 53,448,000, or "full employment" in full production.

It must be noted, however, that these predictions are based on the same type of economic thinking which predicted unending prosperity in the 1920's. Wishful thinking, and a disregard for basic economic principles, can never change the direction of economic forces nor alter their inevitable conclusions. New York, N. Y.

[The author will continue his discussion of full employment in the next issue of the NEWS.]