

Dark Side of Full - Employment

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Unlikely as it may sound to people in underdeveloped countries where the need to create jobs for the many millions unemployed is paramount, the full-employment in post-war Britain and in other countries has been far from an unmixed blessing.

Indeed, the disadvantages of full-employment may amount to a net loss, ranging from the purely economical to the social and moral.

BROADLY speaking, the fully employed nation is often comparable to a household whose members are too busy to keep their home in order. To begin with, the production process may be left uncompleted. Workers, sure of their jobs, slacken down on their duties and thus create further shortage of labour which is already scarce. With the production of goods falling short of market requirements, a vicious circle is set in motion: the price spiral shoots up and generates further wage demands and causes further drain on manpower due to the ensuing lure of profiteering.

Such "boom conditions" draw away workers from arduous yet essential tasks like coal-mining and agriculture, from nursing, attending the aged, the police force and jail personnel, into activities where there is plenty of easy money. Large sections of the population may thus go hungry and cold, while the young, the sick and the old may have to be left to the care of unsuitable persons — the idle, the corrupt, the sadists or the plain inefficient who lack the ability of cashing in on the more rewarding opportunities.

There are also the unsavoury psychological consequences which accompany the fully and particularly the 'over-fully' employed economies.

Employees in jobs—even the best employees in the best jobs — tend to be restless because of the constantly nagging problem: "Could I not do even better elsewhere? Don't I miss a more promising chance by sticking to my rut?"

That leads to an excessive turnover of labour and prevents good many workers from developing lasting and fruitful contact with their places of work. They usually leave an employer before they have obtained a complete experience of the work.

Mum at Work, Too

Opportunities are too enticing for housewives and mothers to stay in their homes — all the more so because, with wages chasing prices and the other way around, it becomes always more and more difficult to "keep up with the Joneses". So, with "mum" out at work to supplement the "old man's" wages, children have not sufficient supervision at home, just at a time when the schools are afflicted with serious staff problems.

With wives out at work and passing half their days surrounded by strangers, the divorce rate is also increasing. All these factors are largely responsible for the alarming rise in juvenile delinquency in some of the prosperous societies.

Children themselves are attracted to earn easy money "while the going is good". They may leave their studies unfinished, abandon vocational training or avoid apprenticeship in order to take up employment with humbler prospects but quicker returns. This trend, obviously enough, jeopardises the skill and quality of tomorrow's manpower. The competition for skilled jobs thus further reduced, there is a decline in the quantity and particularly in the quality of the national output.

The high premium on purely menial tasks imposes, at the same time, an additional psychological burden on the numerically inadequate teaching staff at the schools. Not even the best of masters is helped in his unhill task when some of the pupils take the attitude: "What's all 'is fuss 'bout spelling, Sir? Me dad can 'ardly write his own name, but 'e makes more an you do. Sir. e does."

On the whole, few people are sorry for the gradual disappearance of domestic service in the Western countries, because it is felt: "Why should a middle-class housewife not

do her own chores, just as other women do?" However, even this march of equality has its drawback.

In the past, the ladies of the middle-classes used to be the best customers of the booksellers and, indirectly, of the poets and the novelists. Now that they no longer have domestic servants—indeed, very often they go out to work themselves—their hours of leisure, enjoyably yet profitably spent over books, in gone-by days, are practically non-existent. This state of affairs has already been unfavourably reflected in the sale figures of books and the better class of magazines. Authors, with the possible exception of the television scriptwriters, are therefore likely to suffer along with the poor housewives, working on "two shifts", in the office and at home,

Under such circumstances, the recent Commonwealth Immigration Bill, to bar from Britain thousands of willing hands ready to alleviate the strain on her over-stretched manpower, is likely to do economic as well as political damage to the U K.

Mysore Iron and Steel Works

THE capacity of the Mysore Iron and Steel Works will be expanded in 1,00,000 tons of steel ingots per annum during the Third Plan. The present annual capacity is 30,000 tons of steel ingots only. Included in the expansion programme are the L D plant and electric furnace for steel making a billet and light structural mill and ancillary schemes for expansion of yard, foundry, etc. The Works will also complete installation of the sintering plant and the ferro-silicon plant which was undertaken during the Second Plan.

The Government is also considering a proposal to set up a tool and alloy steel plant with a capacity of 15,000 tons per annum.