

Ferdie J. Deering

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To Whip Inflation Now, End Waste

WHEN John D. deButts, chairman and chief executive officer of AT&T, spoke in Oklahoma City recently, he left several old-fashioned ideas that businessmen could use for new directions in management.

He said that the way to fight inflation is to increase production and reduce waste. Very simple. He might have added that the same formula will also fight depression.

DeButts must be using something like that in his own company. He reported that during the past four years production has been increased 33 per cent without increasing the number of employees.

This is just about the opposite of the records of many companies, which have added people to their payrolls just to keep output where it was. This boosts inflation without necessarily resulting in more profit to anyone; just higher costs all around.

Careless waste is a quick way to change prosperity to poverty, no matter how good business, prices or wages may be. If poverty already exists, waste will perpetuate it.

This is nothing new. Back during the Revolutionary war, colonists sang "Yankee Doodle" and the second verse went like this:

"And there we see a thousand men,
Rich as Squire David,
And what they wasted every day,
I wish it could be saved!"

Americans waste a lot of food, which is one of the most troublesome and personal inflated costs. An Ari-

zona professor has reported a study showing that 9 per cent of a family's food bill is thrown away. He calculated that the annual food waste in Tucson, where the study was made, amounts to \$10 million a year.

Business and industry have encouraged waste in order to sell more, but that seems to be changing. The idea of built-in obsolescence is not as well accepted as formerly. Customers are paying more attention to serviceability and less to model year.

The shift away from reusable soft drink bottles to throwaway containers may be changing back again. Disposable containers have been attacked by environmentalists, highway beautification boosters, and by conservationists who hate to see lakes, rivers and parks cluttered up by junk.

Oregon has a law forbidding sale

of pop-top cans and non-returnable bottles, and a number of cities are considering ordinances to ban them. A bill to enact a nationwide prohibition has been introduced into Congress, but it probably will have to be "recycled" to receive consideration next year.

Economy of mass production has caused designers to make plans for non-repairable small appliances. Those that cannot be repaired, though damaged, must be replaced. Many people consider this to be a wasteful practice.

Others look with disfavor upon the use of paper handkerchiefs, napkins, dishes, diapers and disposable clothing.

The old proverb, "Waste not, want not," still has validity, whether we are talking about natural resources, business management, or time. What is wasted may be lost forever.