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Americans Losing Right to Work

ONE of the basic freedoms of American citizens is the right to farm, run a business or work at a job or profession of one's choice. This right is being restricted by government regulations, union rules, and employers being forced to hire only union members.

Americans are losing their right to work, perhaps because the discontented minority is being used by organizations, or on account of deliberately created dissatisfaction, or because most workers are indifferent to what is happening, being pacified by a sense of well-being or a fear of reprisal if they object.

A recent study showed that most people were satisfied with their jobs and willing to work. The Family Economics Bureau (FEB) of Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, Minneapolis, found that surveys featuring dissatisfied employees often neglect to mention that the unhappy ones are a minority.

The FEB offered suggestions designed to help those who aren't happy with their jobs to improve their situations. The list of suggestions included:

- Identifying the kind of performance employers value most;

- Learning new skills to prepare for better jobs;

- Doing the best job possible, through hard work, persistence and imagination, thereby attracting the boss's attention;

- Acting enthusiastic, which might lead to becoming enthusiastic;

- Opening communications with the boss, by discussing problems, suggestions or ideas for doing better.

Without question, one of the major causes of employee dissatisfaction is that many young people do not really know what they want to

do and must take whatever is offered because they may not be specifically qualified for any line of work.

Federal laws prevent youngsters from getting jobs until they are 16 years old and many companies do not offer opportunities for those that young. Few high school graduates have had a chance to observe closely or gain experience in places of business that would enable them to select careers intelligently. Some trades or professions need preparation that begins in junior high school.

Add to that the fact that relatively few teachers have had extensive work experience and it is not surprising that the "Less Work Ethic" and antibusiness attitude are spreading.

This month a business equipment manufacturing firm announced that it will expand an experimental plan

that allows employees to set their hours of work. The schedule allows employees to start any time after 7 a.m. and they may work as late as 6 p.m., presumably putting in 7½ hours of work sometime during the day.

In predicting that the flexible pattern would spread, one of the company's executives observed that lateness would become nonexistent.

The idea of a 4-day, 40-hour work week got a boost about two years ago, but the only recent reports of new firms adopting it have been those cutting back on production. It didn't work out as predicted.

Too frequently overlooked in negotiations to be paid more for less work is the fact that all of these costs must be covered by income from whatever amount is produced. The ultimate consumer must pay the costs of nonproduction as well as costs of production.