

Ferdie J. Deering

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Today's Joblessness Not Like the '30s

THOSE of us who lived through "The Great Depression" of the 1930s may never be able to rationalize the phenomenon of newspaper pages crammed with "Help Wanted" ads and millions of unemployed people.

This seems to be less of a problem in Oklahoma than in other states, but there probably are people here who would rather subsist on public welfare than to take a job they might not like.

During the Depression if somebody offered to hire you, you accepted the job pronto. You would find out what you would have to do and how much it paid afterward. If you didn't take the job, the man right behind you would.

Nowadays workers are so specialized, and limited by union restrictions, that many will hardly consider other kinds of work. The exceptions fare better in good times and bad. There nearly always is work to be found that will pay something, and it is better to have something coming in than to have nothing.

Bureau of Labor statistics pub-

lished recently show that the largest bloc of jobless people are minority teen-agers, who accounted for 39.6 percent of the total for December 1981. The second largest group was "blue collar workers" with 12.9 percent of the total.

Business men attribute this situation to several causes. First is that youngsters are not prepared to work. Because child labor laws prevent them from getting regular job experience until they are 16 years old, child "non labor habits" are ingrained.

Besides not knowing what to do on the job, many have little sense of responsibility insofar as reporting for work on time and following instructions are concerned. Numerous employers have complained that teen-agers they have hired are unwilling to learn.

The minimum wage law has been widely blamed as a cause of joblessness. Economists say each increase in the minimum wage has been accompanied by an increase in teenage unemployment.

They are being priced out of the

market because they aren't capable of producing what the federal wage law says employers must pay.

Although there were terrible evils that the child labor law was enacted to eliminate, there are important reasons why disciplined work experience should be provided every child early in life.

This writer began driving a one-horse delivery cart in 1918 for 50 cents a day when 8 years old. There has been no period since as long as 30 days, while in school or during the Depression, that he has not held one or more jobs. This is true now, even though retired.

Some of these jobs paid very little, but there were other benefits. Employers who could pay more preferred to hire someone whom they had observed working over those they had seen idly waiting for the right kind of job to turn up.

Objectively, it must be admitted that a considerable proportion of the unemployment problem is caused by the unemployed. If they won't accept the jobs available, they'll stay out of work.

MAR 7 1982
Worker Fed Up

TO THE EDITOR;

I am in complete accord with Ferdie Deering's editorial in The Daily Oklahoman Feb. 9 — "Today's Joblessness Not Like the 30s."

How well I remember those days following my graduation from high school at much sacrifice by my parents. The scarcity of "Help Wanted" ads and millions of unemployed people. I was fortunate enough to have obtained a job for \$10 per week — that was a six-day, 9-hours-a-day, 54-hour week — and I clung to it.

I would add two words to the last sentence of your item: "and work"; thus it would read "If they won't accept AND WORK the jobs available, they'll stay out of work."

Those of us who lived through the Great Depression are so fed up with going into any type of retail establishment and being ignored by one or more sales persons who are merely visiting with one another or just standing around or leaning on a counter. They are just there for pay day and coffee breaks — they could't care less about whether or not they EARN those items.

Blanche B. Mock, City