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## How Our Society's 'Mix' Is Changing

**D**EMOGRAPHERS have been telling us that our country is shifting from a "production society" to a "service society."

This means fewer people are engaged in manufacturing, construction and mining, while more work for government, transportation, utilities, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate. All are necessary. It's just the "mix" that's changing.

Reasons for the changes aren't necessarily good, and we might wonder if we are better off with more services and less productivity. More services might not always mean better service.

We have fewer people making cars in this country because excessive union demands have forced prices of American cars higher than prices of imported cars. We import TVs, radios and cameras because other countries make these products cheaper and better.

Construction employment has decreased because interest rates may require buyers to pay nearly as much for "renting money" as they do for the expensive houses.

Forecasts that more people would be working in transportation and utilities have not materialized but the number employed in wholesaling and retailing has increased. Even so, more and more people must wait on themselves in retail stores, restaurants and gasoline stations, and then wait in line to pay for what they've bought.

"Do-it-yourself" stores are doing a lively business catering to customers who may have to do their own building, repairing and maintenance if they get it done at all. Our "service society" does not always provide its services at prices we can afford.

Complex machinery, computers and electronic devices, untrained employees and, sometimes, outright dishonesty make it difficult for consumers to obtain correct diagnoses when their automobiles or appliances break down.

Unless causes of troubles are properly identified, attempts to make repairs are apt to fail, regardless of time and money spent.

Since warranties and guarantees have been brought under govern-

ment scrutiny they have been rewritten to protect manufacturers and local dealers may just shrug off complaints, referring customers to the makers, usually in distant cities.

It may be so inconvenient for purchasers to pack and ship products back to the factories, at their own expense, that many may give up and buy replacements. This might be what dealers prefer.

Although one out of every six workers is employed by some branch of government, we can't count on much help from that source. Government has more than it can do to keep its own properties in operating condition.

A recent study reported in Washington post that \$3 trillion is needed to replace or repair water pipes that are rusting, sewers that are bursting, roads that are full of potholes, bridges that are collapsing, and public buildings that are deteriorating.

Citizens and Uncle Sam may have an empathetic feeling that things are falling apart and not enough cash is on hand to fix them.