

Where's America's Zip to Compete?

MEXICAN workers have been finding jobs in this country, legally or illegally, for the same reasons that German cars and Japanese electronic devices have found buyers in the American market.

They are cheaper and they will work.

In far too many cases, Americans have lost their zip to compete. They want to start in at top pay for minimum effort, be paid when not working, and claim the security of lifetime incomes.

Those things may be fine, if they are affordable, but evidence is abundant that many fringe benefits are economically unfeasible.

When added to the cost of products, the merchandise cannot compete for enough buyers to carry the financial load.

The unemployment situation is serious and undoubtedly there are a lot of people out of jobs who would prefer to be working. Still, much of it is confusing to average citizens.

We read in the paper that unemployment rates are rising and that the government ought to do some-

thing about it or else.

In the next column there may be a story about the government cracking down on Mexicans flocking to this country to take jobs that employers can't get Americans to do.

Then we drive down the street and read signs like this: "Help Wanted, Day or Nite, Full Time or Part Time." Certainly, this might not be the most prestigious kind of employment and it probably pays minimum legal wages or slightly above. Moreover, the persons hired might be expected to exert a little energy.

But some jobs are available. Hungry people of most countries would be delighted to find work anywhere.

In the past, Americans were competitive and they were willing to learn new jobs or perform work for which they may have been "over-qualified."

Nowadays, it appears many Americans will not compete, won't learn new duties, or accept work they don't like.

Business people are convinced that liberal welfare and unemployment pay programs encourage

these non-working attitudes.

Some semi-employed people have devised ways to "beat the system," working just enough to maintain eligibility for unemployment pay and returning to a job only when that is used up.

Economists say that hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in steel, automobile and other industries will never come back. The products made in this country no longer are strongly competitive in the world market. Foreign products are cheaper and just as good.

That foreign workers flock to this country to accept jobs Americans won't take is the ultimate insult to our reputation for being a hard-working, productive people.

The truth is that American workers have become pampered, slothful, indolent and lazy. Instead of going forth, pioneer fashion, to wrest a livelihood from the world, they want it brought to them.

If Americans workers won't take available jobs, then we may expect Mexicans and others to come in to replace them.