

SEP 15 1983 More Jobs Needed

MORE than 10 million people are unemployed in the United States, with a prevailing unemployment rate of about 9 percent. Experts say 20 million new jobs will be needed by 1990 to stay at this level.

To accomplish this, the country will have to do quite a bit better at creating jobs during the next seven years than during the past seven, when only 12.2 net new jobs became available. Millions of jobs in manufacturing and heavy industries have disappeared, many of them never to return.

Opportunities are developing mainly in fields that require higher skills and pre-employment training, such as computer technicians, food and health services, communications and sales.

The increasing number of people entering the labor market includes many who are unprepared for these jobs and some who are simply "functionally unemployable." Millions have been displaced from their jobs by automated equipment and must be retrained.

Thus the task calls for creation of new jobs and involves a cooperative effort by industries, businesses, schools, institutions and government to provide basic job training.

Great numbers of teen-agers, both black and white, are among the unemployed. Women who head families often are unable to find work because they have not been trained in the skills needed.

The Hispanic population is growing rapidly, but the majority is qualified only for minimum-wage jobs. During the next decade, the black labor force is expected to grow twice as fast as the white and much of it will require more training.

Workers may be justified in seeking higher pay to keep up with inflation, but employers also have a right to consider productivity and costs. Fringe benefits, including vacations, paid holidays, sick leave, insurance and pensions can add one-third to payroll costs. Business owners and investors are entitled to a reasonable profit on their investment.

Standardized wage rates are based upon the principle of "equal pay for equal work." While jobs may be created, output per worker might not be. For that reason, interest is growing in merit pay in various occupations. It is argued that those who produce more and better work should be paid more than mediocre workers.

Unless an unexpected depression or other calamity occurs, there will be a lot more jobs a decade from now, and they will pay more money. However, competition for the better jobs will be more intense. Those who aren't prepared to produce may be relegated to lower-paying trades or be left to exist on unemployment benefits.

The work to be done is changing, but the demand still calls for willing workers with skills to do the jobs.