

Kean University

Kean Digital Learning Commons

Florence Dwyer Report to the People Newsletter 1959 Florence Dwyer Report to the People Newsletter

2-19-1959

Report to the People Vol. 3 No. 7

Florence P. Dwyer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.kean.edu/cp_dwyer_newsletters_1959

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE
FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER - 6th District, New Jersey



1631 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Volume III, Number 7

FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, February 19, 1959

We are living in unusual times .

Should anyone doubt it, let him study our national economy . Despite the fact that prices have remained relatively stable over the past year or so, we are faced with the real danger of price inflation-- the steady rise in the cost of living, the equally steady decline in the value of our money .

And yet, a disturbingly high degree of unemployment, in the neighborhood of 5 million people, hovers over us, the residue of last year's recession . Even though industry has caught up, production-wise, with pre-recession levels, they have done so without employing the pre-recession number of workers .

Union County, like other heavily industrialized areas, is finding the pinch of this situation rather uncomfortable . While exact figures are unavailable, it is estimated that our rate of unemployment is significantly higher than the national average; it is also not so far below last year's peak figure as it should be .

This, briefly, is the economic problem we face . But behind the economic jargon are human considerations we cannot do justice to simply by citing statistics and talking of inflation and unemployment .

- more -

Inflation-- for families on low or fixed incomes, whose weekly pay does not provide for the extra nickel or quarter or dollar gradually added to the cost of food and clothing-- is a frightening thing. The basic necessities of life have to be bought, no matter what the cost, so an all-too-familiar pattern is followed: a family starts to borrow, high interest rates quickly add to the debt, and in desperation even the necessities of decent human living are given up.

Unemployment follows much the same path-- except here the de-humanizing elements of insecurity and fear take hold of a person much sooner.

This is why I have been unable to accept either of two rather glib comments some people toss about-- either "A little unemployment is a good thing for the economy," or "A certain amount of inflation is needed for economic growth."

It is fairly certain that no one making such comments has ever suffered from inflation or unemployment, himself.

I do not expect that they can ever be completely wiped out, but it should never be forgotten that unemployment and inflation are not only economic ills but are moral evils because they cause so much human misery.

This is fundamental in any evaluation of our democratic and free-enterprise political-economic system. And it is fundamental in the social thought of the Judaeo-Christian religions, the source of our moral standards.

Consequently, it is an appropriate background from which to consider the desirability of such major social legislation as the housing bill which comes before the full House Banking and Currency Committee this week.

Federal housing legislation was once a favorite target of those who saw such government programs as "socialistic" enterprises. If this charge was ever warranted, I do not believe it is today.

The present housing bill is chiefly an attempt to encourage private home owners and home builders to continue a high rate of residential construction activity, through programs of loan assistance and mortgage insurance. Even where outright grants are provided, as in urban renewal and the very modest public housing program, they serve to encourage related private building and help greatly to enlarge business and employment opportunities in the area-- as many

businessmen have reminded me. The bill also would allow residents of public housing to buy the units they live in.

The need for the bill has been established in hearings and floor debate both this year and last. Our fast-growing population demands decent housing, overcrowded colleges need more room for incoming students (an especially serious problem in New Jersey where State colleges may have to lower the limits on next year's entering classes), the increasing numbers of elderly persons require suitable living arrangements, and our older cities and urban areas badly need renovation and restoration if they are to compete successfully for industry and business and continue to offer opportunities for employment and clean, healthful living.

These needs won't wait. The longer we avoid doing what is necessary to save our cities and keep up with the housing demands of the population, the more expensive it will be later on.

This is the time, too, when we can most advantageously use the boost a housing program will give to employment and the stimulation it will provide the whole economy.

Unlike some non-productive forms of Government spending, I do not believe we will find the housing program inflationary. Housing is an important investment in the future. It is productive of new wealth, and the sale and use of the property itself will absorb the extra money pumped into the economy.

The bill we will vote on this week is very much like the legislation that almost became law last year. It passed the Senate and received a majority of the votes cast in the House, though it barely failed to obtain the two-thirds required by the rules under which it came to a vote. The compromise reductions in the original bill which have been adopted in the Senate committee, on the Senate floor and now in the House subcommittee, have brought the overall cost of the legislation close to the President's 1960 budget limitation.

The Housing Bill is good legislation because it will be good for all our people.