

More About the Wonder And Worry of Automation

By ALPHONZO BELL, Congressman, 28th District

Procedures for protecting the jobs of workers whose automated equipment is introduced are being tested by the Southern Pacific Railroad and may contribute significantly to broad general policies adopted in this field in other sectors of the economy.

"Attrition" is the basis of the Southern Pacific formula in bargaining with unions about work hours, employee requirements, and the installation of labor saving machinery. Workers who quit, retire or die will not always be replaced. In some cases the unions will not even protest the transfer of an employee to a non-obsolescent job. In this way job eliminations in departments where efficient machines can be acquired will be accelerated.

MOVING workers from marginal situations, where automated equipment might cut operating costs, to more secure positions, makes sense for everybody. Employers can step up the pace of automation without meeting strong union resistance. Unions protect their members. Employees keep their jobs under far more secure circumstances while moving out of the gray area in production where machines are now tending to displace people.

"Attrition," however, does not solve the basic automation problem even though it may be a useful transitional policy in individual industries. When Benjamin Franklin observed in 1872 that

"increased means and increased leisure are the two civilizers of man," he could not have imagined the lightning speed by which leisure would be imposed on some men 100 years later.

THE AVAILABILITY of leisure, also, seems likely to become as unfairly distributed as the availability of employment. Human beings caught on one side of the cutting automation blade find themselves with an excess of leisure but a gap in income. On the other side there are men and women for whom technical innovations have accelerated the process of living to an unpleasant, almost dangerous degree.

Prosperity is not a concern to some people. But a great concern is the need to slow down, to stop competing with and testing the computer, to learn to live lives that are not crushed by the demand for production in a constantly changing competitive industrial society. One little-noticed tragedy of automation is the impact on people who outwardly seem to be benefiting from it.

JOB PROTECTION and expansion of the labor market in the United States are certainly the supreme challenges of our incredible new technological versatility. But protection and expansion of the human spirit should not be neglected. Among the insecure, as well as among the overly secure upon whom the system is dependent and who

are driven by it, social and economic and psychological adjustments must be made. It is unlikely that any other aspect of capitalism has so quickly changed the basic conditions of so many human lives in so short a time. That the pace of change will quicken, rather than slow down, is a certainty. With automation the nation's real income per person is likely to skyrocket.

Church Stewardship Dinner Slated Tonight at Del Amo

Del Amo Southern Baptist Church, 3915 W. 226th St., will host its annual Stewardship Dinner this evening. J. L. Hardin, business manager of Riverside's California Baptist College, will be the speaker.

Special music for the evening will be provided by the college's music department. William Downey, chairman of the church's finance committee, is activities chairman for the evening.

Sunday will be "Fisher's Commitment Day" in the church. Members of the congregation will be asked to dedicate their intention to faith during the coming year.

The Rev. Daniel B. Weaver, pastor of the church, will deliver another in the series of his special youth messages during the Sunday evening service. His subject for this Sunday is "When in Rome, Do As the Romans Do." The service will begin at 7 o'clock.

False face must hide what the false heart doth know—William Shakespeare.

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