

THE success of Allied arms in Europe brought a flustered Congress back to Washington to consider postwar legislation. First in importance, of course, were the unemployment compensation bills, it being generally conceded that we are going to have a lot of dislocation after the shooting stops.

The liberal if loosely constructed Murray-Kilgore bill went down to defeat in the Senate, where the highly inadequate George bill was passed in less time than it often takes to get through a simple claims bill. The House Ways and Means Committee pruned the measure still further, notably the section granting unemployment compensation to federal employees, and then sent it to the floor where efforts to liberalize some of its worst features promise to meet with small success.

The bill sets up an Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, in line with the suggestion made in the Baruch-Hancock report, which will absorb a number of existing agencies. The bill specifically names the Office of Contract Settlement and the Surplus Property Administration. As it came from the Senate, it included also the Retraining and Reemployment Administration, but the House Committee on Ways and Means changed that. As there is strong feeling on the subject in the House, the committee may be overriden on this point. It would not be surprising, indeed, to see the House add a few other agencies to the three. The House very definitely feels that the postwar program should be more or less centralized.

THE MOVEMENT TO MODERNIZE CONGRESSIONAL procedures received its first tangible encouragement with the passage of the Maloney-Monroney resolution by the Senate. The resolution sets up a bi-partisan Senate-House committee authorized to make a survey of the antiquated organization of Congress and to make recommendations for improvements with the "view of simplifying them and improving relations with other branches of the government."

If such a committee actually is named (the bill has yet to win House approval) it probably will include in its study many of the specific programs for reform included in the Kefauver bill and similar measures. The Kefauver proposal provides for the regular appearance of Cabinet members before Congress, as is the British practice.

Representative A. S. M. Monroney of Oklahoma, sponsor of the House bill, has been pressing for action on the legislation

for months. The young man feels very strongly on the subject, and is confident that many of the troubles of Congress are due to the fact that it operates under a system of committees, procedures, and so on, many of which were established before the Spanish-American War. He is concerned, also, over the entirely inadequate help given Congress in the handling of highly technical matters. He himself is a member of the House Banking and Currency Committee which, he says, handles legislation dealing with world monetary problems and yet has no one on its staff who knows anything about the subject.

CONGRESS HAVING AMENDED THE service vote law to permit members of the armed forces to know what is going on back home, the army has scrapped its complicated system for keeping politics out of government-sponsored reading matter for GI Joe. Critics had accused the army of using the legislation as a reason for "censoring" ("screening" is the army word) newspapers, magazines, books, and movies. The net result was, however, that so far as soldiers in training camps and overseas knew, the election this year had been called off.

The fact that Congress has reconsidered is not going to help a lot in many instances. It is a long way to some of the spots where GI Joe now hangs his hat and it is improbable that much of the uncensored stuff will reach these remote fronts or bases before election. Anyway, he can read about it afterward.

A PROPOSAL TO REVIVE THE CIVILIAN Conservation Corps is gaining a favorable ear in Congress. Remembering all the brickbats once hurled at that agency, it is interesting to note that Congress now agrees, or, at least, some Congressmen do, that it did a good job and that a new CCC will be needed after the war.

SO MANY HEADACHES HAVE DEVELOPED in connection with the administration of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (see page 243) that the agencies involved probably will appeal to Congress for clarification. Congress gave the Veterans Administration the primary responsibility for carrying out the provisions of the act, but failed to specify clearly just how the VA should delegate authority. Obviously, much of the authority must be delegated, as the VA has neither the facilities nor the background to perform many of the chores involved. It may be

necessary to amend the act, but any question of changes in the measure itself seems likely to be held over until after election. Some of the points involved are considered political dynamite.

The VA thought the educational features of the act would be relatively simple to handle, since these meant, as that agency saw it, merely an elaboration of the existing VA program for veterans with service connected disabilities. However, some of the state colleges object to accepting veterans on the same basis as other native sons. The VA insists that if a veteran was entitled to schooling at his state's expense before he went into the service, he is entitled to it after he is discharged. The Veterans Administration is willing to pay his allotment and other items but tuition to a state college, "No."

HEARINGS ON THE BILL TO CREATE A permanent Fair Employment Practice Committee have been postponed in the House until after election. The Senate is going ahead, election or no election. However, an early vote in either house now seems unlikely.

THE SELECTION OF JULIUS A. KRUG as executive vice-chairman of the War Production Board, to succeed Charles E. Wilson, is hailed as a victory for the liberals in WPB. Mr. Krug had been with the agency before he resigned to go into the navy, and his resignation was generally rumored to have been inspired by his disagreements with some of the non-liberals. Before joining the WPB staff, he was an official of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and back of that he has a long record as a public utility administrator.

THE UNITED MINE WORKERS ARE calling attention to the 50,000 persons over sixty-five who have gone back to work, cutting themselves off the old-age pension rolls to take war jobs. Under the law, written to discourage oldsters from reentering the labor market, these persons are now paying social security taxes which will be of no benefit to them when they again retire. The law automatically freezes the amount of their benefits at the time they were originally computed. When they return to the pension rolls they will receive the same benefit paid when they left, regardless of the additional money they have earned, or the additional taxes they have paid. An amendment to the Social Security Act to correct the injustice is advocated by the miners.

The Common Welfare

Reconversion

A STORM warning to states and communities is implicit in recent statements from the War Manpower Commission on war industry cut-backs after Germany's surrender. The WMC estimates that within thirty days after victory in Europe 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 war workers will be laid off. William R. Haber, assistant director of the WMC, has stated that he believes most of the workers affected will have jobs in civilian production within three or four months. J. A. Krug, acting chairman of the War Production Board, has also gone on record as believing that industrial change-over from a war to a peace footing will be a matter of only "three or four months," particularly in automobiles.

But to community agencies which, even through the labor shortage of war years, have not forgotten the hard lessons of the Thirties, temporary dislocation on so large a scale spells "problems." Even with unemployment insurance and a back log of war bonds, laid-off workers and their families face a period of reduced standards of living, and a resulting need for community services. In thousands of cases, the end of his present job will start the worker on an immediate trek back to the home he left only "for the duration." Clearly, V-Day in Europe will initiate a period of readjustment and complex demands, for which community plans and preparations should be made without delay.

Re-Schooling

AN appeal for special educational programs to meet the postwar needs of youths who have taken war jobs before finishing school was made by the American Federation of Teachers at its annual convention. In a thoroughly discussed resolution covering vocational training and rehabilitation, the teachers noted that many girls and boys under seventeen had cut short their education for war work. As adopted, the resolution suggests to all locals of the Federation that they help prepare plans for out-of-school young people, including statewide counseling and guidance services, classes in applied arts and science, the introduction of flexible part time and terminal courses especially adapted to this group, and the reestablishment of a program similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, also concerned with youth's postwar problems, has put for-

ward a four-point program, aimed "to cushion the impact of reconversion, to regain opportunities for school attendance, and better to equip the nation's young people for dealing with economic and personal problems of the postwar world." This program includes: full enforcement of existing federal and state child labor laws; revision of state laws "to provide a sixteen-year minimum age for employment in any occupation during school hours and in factory work at any time"; educational allowances in lieu of unemployment compensation benefits for young workers returning to school; planning of other measures of helping young persons resume their education, including student aid.

A Civil Liberties Case

"REFUGEES in America from America," is the way the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People characterizes the present situation of four former residents of New Iberia, La. In calling attention to a violation of civil liberties which has not been widely reported, the NAACP emphasizes the fact that in this instance the infringement was not by an irresponsible mob, but by local law enforcement and school officials.

The case involves four Negro leaders who, until last May, lived in New Iberia, a town of 15,000, about 125 miles west of New Orleans. One of the men was a teacher, one an elderly retired insurance agent, one a dentist, and one a physician. All four had taken part in forming a local branch of the NAACP and a parish credit union. The issue arose over the activities of J. Leo Hardy, former insurance agent, in trying to secure a welding school for Negroes in the community.

A welding school, opened in the fall of 1941, admitted only white students. For more than a year, potential Negro welders tried to secure training facilities, and finally a protest was sent to the War Manpower Commission. After representatives of the WMC, and later a field examiner of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, visited New Iberia, a class for Negroes was started. Trouble followed almost immediately.

The NAACP offers affidavits in proof of the "punishment" meted out to the four Negro leaders. In a meeting with the sheriff and the superintendent of schools, to which he was summoned, Mr. Hardy was threatened and ordered out of town. The next day he was set upon by the sheriff and a deputy, kicked and badly

beaten. Each of the other three was handled by deputy sheriffs, though with less violence. Finally, all four were separately taken out of town, ordered to "move and keep moving," threatened with death if they returned to their homes.

Today, like the other refugees in our midst, the four are trying to make new starts in other communities. Meanwhile, the legal department of the NAACP has lodged a protest with the Department of Justice. So far, the NAACP points out, no action has been taken to reinstate these "American refugees," nor to punish those responsible for their plight.

Reductio ad absurdum

A CURRENT attack on the U. S. Children's Bureau might become serious. A congressional bill (H.R. 4663), introduced by Representative A. L. Miller of Nebraska, which would transfer all of the bureau's health functions to the U. S. Public Health Service, was given formal support by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association last June. A recent statement, widely publicized, in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, announcing the opposition of the Academy of Pediatrics to the Children's Bureau program, is further evidence of aggressive support behind the Miller bill.

The opposition grows directly out of the bureau's administration of Emergency Maternity and Infant Care, providing medical, nursing, and hospital care for wives and infants of men in the four lowest pay grades of the armed services. The program has \$42,800,000 budgeted for 1945, to be spent through grants to state health agencies.

The Children's Bureau does not set standards for the medical care for which payment is made. Authority to do so was eliminated from the original bill, mainly because of organized opposition from osteopaths. But the bureau does insist that the states pay the physician or hospital or specialist directly for services rendered, instead of making a cash grant to the serviceman's wife. Each state, in submitting to the bureau for approval the plan for administration, must recommend a scale of fees.

Therein lies the crux of the controversy, for direct payment for services to physicians, in accordance with a fixed scale of fees, is regarded by some members of the medical profession as opening a crack in the doorway of socialized medicine.

The whole controversy would be absurd if it did not represent a real danger to more than one going program. The