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FULL EMPLOYMENT AFTER THE WAR: HOW TO ACHIEVE IT AND MAINTAIN IT¹

By Dr. JOSEPH MAYER

BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D. C.

INTRODUCTORY

ON September 10, the first comprehensive official statement on postwar reemployment appeared in the public press in a report made by War Mobilization Director Byrnes. This statement gives even more point to the proposals offered in the following pages, in that the major unemployment problems soon to confront the nation seemed to be given short shrift. Director Byrnes asserted that only the "fears of timid people" stand in the way of continued employment at the present high levels and that "the present national income" should be maintained.

¹ Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section L of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1943). The views expressed in this address are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of his institution.

At about the same time the public was advised that one million soldiers and four million war workers will lose their jobs soon after X-day, the day the Nazis are defeated. Putting millions of breadwinners back to work in peacetime occupations on short notice will be no mean job.

Furthermore, our present war-level national income of 160 billions can not be maintained after the war without an enormous monetary inflation which nobody wants. Going back to the 40-hour week and returning millions of youngsters, housewives and oldsters to school, housework and retirement will of themselves reduce the present national income very considerably. The proper postwar employment and income outlook should not be in terms of wartime over-employment and consequent over-production, but in terms of what



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