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HAROLD NEWMAN'S CLOUDY CRYSTAL BALL

"SOPHIE CHATTEL-MONKHEIM was a Socialist by conviction and a Chattel-Monkheim by marriage. The particular member of that wealthy family whom she had married was rich, even as his relatives counted riches. Sophie had very advanced and decided views as to the distribution of money: it was a pleasing and fortunate circumstance that she also had the money. When she inveighed eloquently against the evils of capitalism at drawing-room meetings and Fabian conferences, she was conscious of a comfortable feeling that the system, with all its inequalities and iniquities, would probably last her time. It is one of the consolations of middle aged reformers that the good they inculcate must live after them if it is to live at all."

The Byzantine Omelette

Saki (H. H. Munroe) 1870-1916

Last year three Southern California medical educators, Dr. Donald H. Naftulin, John E. Ware, Jr. and Frank A. Donnelly, devised a hoax for an experiment. They hired a professional actor, dressed him up with a fictitious "curriculum vitae", and presented him to lecture three groups of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. The actor's subject was announced as "Mathematical Game Theory as Applied to Physical Education". He was billed as "Dr. Myron L. Fox of the Albert Einstein Univeristy".

"Dr. Fox" lectured 55 educators, employing academic jargon and double-talk, citing one irrelevant, conflicting and meaningless statement after another. In his question and answer period he was even more contradictory and meaningless.

When his lecture was finished, a satisfaction questionnaire was distributed to the audience, whose members were asked to respond anonymously to "Dr. Fox's" talk.

Herewith are some of their comments: "Excellent presentation, enjoyed listening. Has warm manner, good flow, seems enthusiastic, lively examples...extremely articulate...too intellectual".

Not one of the educators realized that their authoritative lecturer was a phony. Virtually all were convinced that they had learned something.

What this means, say the three educators who originated the experiment, is that student satisfaction with learning may represent little more than the illusion of having learned. Now, this "experiment" was widely reported in the media and many of our readers have already had an opportunity to chuckle over it. It has its amusing aspect but we feel that it demonstrates a rather tragic situation.

In this column several years ago¹ we had the temerity to state that there is a paucity of useful research in the field of labor relations. Staves were broken across the naked pate and a few angry panelists charged (incorrectly) that we were opposed to research. We simply felt then and still believe that much of the research in our field is trivial and pointless. We are not suggesting that like that "Dr. Myron L. Fox", it is a hoax. But at the time we wrote that column we were irritated and we remain sorely annoyed by articles and papers which attempt to translate everything from arbitration to labor history into econometric measurements that are as useful as food stamps to a Rockefeller. Economists, for example, though social scientists they are deemed, seem determined to write only for each other - and in language so studded with logarithm, root, power and reciprocal that their dismal "science" cannot have to do with human concerns.

Mediators, arbitrators and fact finders always are affected by the economic policy determinations and, of course, the social and labor legislation promulgated by the state and federal governments. This is true whether the impartial is working in the private or public sectors although there is usually greater impact in the public sector. The announcement has been made by Congressional leaders that they and President Carter have agreed to a major expansion in government work programs for the unemployed.

¹ PERB Bulletin For Mediators/Fact Finders, Vol. 5, No. 6, June 1974.

local governments must not be permitted to fire permanent employees in order to hire temporary public service job seekers. Workers hired under the Public Service Employment program local should be accorded the same general conditions of employment as regular state and local government employees."⁷ Shall we recite the melancholy roll in our own State alone, New York City, Yonkers, Newburgh, Buffalo, etc.? Is this an attainable goal?

The final speaker on the subject Jean Couturier, is probably the most informed person in the country on the impact of collective bargaining on civil service systems. (Jean used to be Executive Secretary of the National Civil Service League.) I have known Jean Couturier for almost twenty years and I submit that he is not easily intimidated. Faced with the problems outlined by Zimmerman and Persons, Couturier offered two "basic points for debate". One is that public employment throughout history has provided for upward mobility for those historically locked out of society. Second, that the issues confronting public sector bargaining in the face of public service programs which are federally subsidized are not essentially different from those involving government subsidization of private sector activities.

The first of Couturier's propositions is for us a bit easier to accept than the second. We have lots of examples in ethnically diverse New York City. The teaching profession changed after generations from predominantly Wasp to Irish to Jewish; the police and transit personnel from almost exclusively Irish to currently large numbers of blacks and Hispanics. To his second proposition, Couturier argues, "...if we think of federally supported job programs in the context of Daniel Bell's 'post-industrial society' we will recognize that the federal government is merely buying services from state and local governments. This is appropriate in a service society. It is inevitable in a society that is increasingly shifting its resources from the private to the public sectors. Thus, the problems of seniority, "leap-frogging", layoffs, phony job titles, and union security are not significantly different from those same problems when the government buys airplanes from Boeing, tractors from General Motors, services from General Learning, or war chemicals from General Aniline. Rather, it is buying services from general governments."⁸

We find the second Couturier proposition unpersuasive. Nevertheless, it is an interesting theory. Public service programs are obviously not all that will be done by the Federal and State governments to improve the state of the economy, but they are certain to present new challenges to the labor neutral. We are used to working in pressured or even emotionally charged situations but the fear likely to surface as PSE programs impact on public employees and their governments may reach the emotional level of a Fenian rally at the grave of the O'Donovan Rossa.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COVERAGE. A federal law mandates unemployment insurance coverage as of January 1, 1978 for employees of state and local governments. The coverage under Special Unemployment Assistance has been extended until the new program starts. Professional school employees are not eligible between terms if they have a reasonable expectation of returning to work. The eligibility of nonprofessional employees for intra-term benefits will be determined by State legislative action. The public employers will not have to pay the Federal Unemployment Insurance Tax but will have to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund either as an experienced rated employer or paying the actual costs of payments to ex-employees.

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RECENT SETTLEMENTS

<u>Agreement Between</u>	<u>Summary of Provisions</u>		
Chenango County and New York State Nurses Association 1977 (Covers about 10 Nurses)	<u>Salaries:</u>	Increased 5% but no increment during life of 1977 agreement.	
	<u>Title</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
	Registered Nurse-Start	\$ 9,129	\$ 9,585
	Top(6th Yr.)	10,156	10,664
	Public Health Nurse-Start	10,156	10,664
	Top (6th Yr.)	11,734	12,321
	<u>Holidays:</u>	Increased from 11 to 12 by adding 2 floating ones and dropping Lincoln's Birthday.	
	<u>Sick Leave:</u>	Maximum accumulation raised from 132 to 144 days.	

⁷ Ibid, pp. 179-183.

⁸ Ibid, pp. 184-189.