

Editorials

There's No Pie in the Sky

Studebaker workers at South Bend and their union leaders faced up to the economic facts of life this week by voting to accept a pay cut. That's bitter medicine for anybody to swallow. But nearly everybody involved agreed it was the only way to save the company — and the workers' jobs.

Unfortunately, such an acceptance of hard realities is too often lacking in management-union differences. The classic symbol of unrealism, we believe, has been John L. Lewis.

During his long career the United Mine Workers chief did much to raise the standards of life for men in Indiana and elsewhere who deserved all they could reasonably get for their hard, dangerous work.

But after World War II the storm signals were up for the coal industry. Other fuels were competing more and more strongly. So what did Mr. Lewis do? He began pushing through sets of conditions which made it all the more difficult for coal to compete.

Today, coal is a "sick" industry and Mr. Lewis' miners also are suffering.

Currently in the news is another glaring instance of unrealism on the part of union leaders. That is the strike of American Airlines' handsomely paid pilots. They are out in protest against flying some 35 minutes more than 8 hours a day in trans-continental flights. The impartial Civil Aeronautics Board has punctured their claim that it is a safety

issue. So it appears to be a plain case of featherbedding — an effort to make American hire extra, high-priced plane crews.

The result: American is suffering. The pilots are suffering. The public is suffering. And American says all its employees in Indianapolis and elsewhere in the country will be dropped tomorrow midnight unless the pilots return to work.

Another current strike affects two Indiana rubber plants. The basic issue in a wage increase. But company officials at Noblesville have charged that the union is seeking contract changes which include a 30-hour week. If that is true, chalk up another instance of unrealism. Few industries in this country could survive a 30-hour week for 40 hours' pay.

Although the Studebaker case became a victory for common sense, it had a pie-in-the-sky background. The union had saddled the company with a pay scale considerably higher than those prevailing at other firms. The apparent aim was to force the "Big Three" into line.

In his midyear economic report this week President Eisenhower reported a halt in business declines and foresaw a bright future. Continuing and increasing prosperity will depend in part on a general acceptance of the fact that nobody can get something for nothing. There is no place in this country for either predatory unionism or predatory industrialism.