

Senator PROXMIRE. Not without a punishing increase in costs. I do not favor it now.

Mr. ELLIS. I do not, either. I do not think labor wants a shorter workweek with a lower standard of living. And it is impossible, without increasing productivity correspondingly, to have a lower workweek at the same weekly income rate.

Our standard of living is based upon what we produce.

Senator PROXMIRE. I will not argue with you on the facts. I would say Mr. Meany has indicated that he is serious about this. And he is the spokesman for 16 million workers.

Mr. ELLIS. But would it not result in more moonlighting?

Senator PROXMIRE. Again, I am not arguing the merits. I think perhaps moonlighting has been somewhat exaggerated. But whether it would or would not, I think it is something we should be concerned with. And I think there is a legitimate reason behind this, because the working people are really concerned about seeing a situation in which, even in periods of recovery and economic prosperity, there are 4 million people unemployed.

And while your figures are perfectly correct, I call your attention to the charts on page 43, which show that about 2 percent of the unemployed have been unemployed for more than 15 weeks, and some 3.6 percent of the married men are out of work, and of the experienced wage and salaried workers, a very, very high percentage, over 5 percent, are out of work.

Mr. ELLIS. Senator, would you say that it is possible that the wage rate is also affecting unemployment, that labor in some cases has priced itself out of the market?

Mr. WISHART. At certain points administered prices in industry have reduced possible demand to a level which has created unemployment. In terms of wage costs, the fact is that the wage costs per unit of output have been declining in absolute terms over the past 3 years. And I refer you to an exhibit submitted by Mr. Reuther before this committee last February.

Senator PROXMIRE. This is certainly true in many industries. It seems to be true in steel and in some other areas, even though they have had very substantial wage increases.

Mr. WISHART. These are overall figures, covering manufacturing industry as a whole.

Senator PROXMIRE. There is an indication of this, too, in the fact that we have had fairly stable prices over the last couple of years.

Mr. WISHART. Might I say, too, that labor's proposal for a shorter workweek—and I am speaking on behalf of a labor organization, here—is not one to be underestimated in any sense of the word. Obviously, we would prefer full employment, with a 40-hour workweek, but without full employment, without the prospect of full employment, the proposal for a shortening of work hours is one which has behind it genuine force, momentum, and support.

Senator BUSH. Do you really believe that union members would want to reduce their workweek from 40 hours to 35 hours without substantial increase in pay?

Mr. WISHART. Not without substantial increases in pay; no.