

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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CRITICAL MATERIALS "COP"

Did you ever hear of CPA? No, it does not stand for Certified Public Accountant in this case. It's the Civilian Production Administration, the boss of critical materials. It's really the progeny of WPB. During the war, the War Production Board told manufacturers and producers what materials they could have and how much, to make sure that war plants which were producing weapons and necessary supplies had enough to fill their contracts. After VJ-Day, the WPB was abolished and the CPA came into being to ration scarce materials, prevent bottle-necks, and assure that producers of certain essential low-priced items got materials. The number of employees was promptly reduced from 23,000 to 2500 and the number of control orders was reduced from 650 to 42.

BUT VJ-DAY DID NOT SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS.

On and after VJ-Day, some items were still in very short and critical supply. Our supply of tin is smaller now than when war ended. Lead, copper, antimony, cadmium and other items are also critical. Our pile of natural rubber is down to 100,000 tons and the amount of natural rubber for use in tires had to be controlled. Quinine was so short that there was danger of a real black market. Bottles and glass containers were so short that manufacturers had to be held to the production of certain standard types in order to get full production. But despite this condition in the Fall of last year, CPA expected production to go forward so that shortages would be cured and it could then wind up it's operations by June of 1946. Just now, it's not so sure.

NEW TROUBLES.

Strikes, lack of manpower in certain industries and other factors have come into the picture to add to the problems of CPA. The continuance of the steel strike is gradually paralyzing a host of industries that use steel and so CPA must determine who gets the supply of available steel and for what purposes. Our lumber supply is gradually dwindling and it became CPA's job to impose priorities in order to provide some housing for returning veterans. Who gets, tin, copper, lead and antimony all of which are so essential to many industries? That will be for CPA to say. The demand for penicillin, the wonder drug, became so great after VJ-Day that CPA must again ration it's distribution. The textile industry is short about 100,000 men and meanwhile soldiers are returning who will want civilian clothes at once. CPA must say what cloth and how much shall be diverted to men's suits. Thus does CPA become the "cop" on critical items and as strikes continue, it's work increases.

WORK.

So many of the items which are badly needed must come from the lumber camps, the steel mills, the mines, the foundries, the blast furnaces. These can be produced only by hard, dirty and disagreeable work. Until we get back to that work, reconversion from war to peace will continue to slow down, and CPA will have to remain on the job. How old fashioned it seems in this day and age of planning the fancy economic devices that our troubles still spring from one little, simple, four-lettered word that is as old as mankind - WORK.