THE KILGORE BILL.

"We demand that you pass Kilgore Bill without delay." "We demand that Kilgore Bill be defeated." Thus go the letters and telegrams that come to the desk. Thus does Harley Martin Kilgore, 52 year old Senator from the hilly, coal mining area of West Virginia get his name on the legislative marquee in bright lights and thus is another issue born. While Senator Kilgore gets credit for authorship, it should be observed that Senators Murray, Wagner, Guffey, Thomas and Pepper are co-authors. It comes as an amendment to the Reconversion Act of 1944. It's official title is "A Bill ... to provide for an orderly transition from a war to a peace time economy through supplementation of unemployment compensation payable under State laws and for other purposes." It was introduced on July 17, 1945. It languished in the Senate through the summer. In late August, the Senate Finance Committee began to take testimony on this measure. It is still pending in Committee as this is written. So now, we should see what it's all about.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Bill really has two principal provisions. The first relates to unemployment benefit payments and the second relates to the transportation of war workers. As originally introduced, the Bill would authorize the Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion to enter into agreements with the different States whereby, such State, acting as an agent of the Federal Government would make certain minimum payments to unemployed persons by way of unemployment benefits. The State would have to agree that it would pay to a person who is unemployed and eligible for maximum benefits, enough to make $25 per week for a period of 26 weeks. This would be in effect only for the so-called reconversion period and would end on June 30, 1947. Such benefit payments would also be extended to include certain groups of employees who are not now included in this provision of the Social Security Act. These groups include civilian employees of the Federal Government, maritime and marine workers, and those employees who work in plants where agricultural products are packed, frozen, stored or otherwise processed. If a State makes such an agreement the Federal Government will pay it the difference between what it would normally pay for unemployment compensation and what it would pay under this Bill. That is to say that if a worker was entitled to $25 for 26 weeks and the State law provided for only $16 for 20 weeks, the difference which would be $30 could be paid by the State and the State would be reimbursed by the Federal Government. If a State failed for any reason to enter into such an agreement, the benefits prescribed by the Bill could be paid directly out of the Treasury by the Director of Reconversion. Thus, if the State did or did not enter in such an agreement with the Federal Government, the amount of weekly benefits prescribed as a maximum could still be paid to an unemployed person in such State.

TRANSPORTATION.

The other item in the Bill which has received much attention is transportation allowances for war workers. Where a person has been employed in war work wishes to move to a place where there are job opportunities and the U.S. Employment Service certifies that such a job opportunity does exist, the USES is authorized to provide transportation for such person, his dependents and his household goods from the place where he was employed on war work to a place where a job has been certified. As an example, Henry Kaiser gathered up many workers in New York and had them transported to his shipyards in and about Seattle. This was war work. If the USES certifies that a job can be found at San Francisco, the worker and his family and furniture could be transported to the latter place at Government expense. Here then is the essence of the Kilgore Bill and at the moment, it is undergoing a rather substantial revision in the Senate Committee on Finance. The transportation item was revised so it could not exceed $200 nor could it exceed an amount necessary to get the worker to his home. That is to say that if he worked in Seattle and lived in Chicago, the amount could not exceed the expense involved in bringing him and his dependents and goods back to Chicago, even tho the job might have been certified in Miami, Florida. These payments would not be made if the war contractor for whom he worked had agreed to pay his passage nor would they be paid to any person who left his war work before December 7th, 1941, namely Pearl Harbor Day. The compensation provisions have been modified so that the Federal Government cannot compel States to pay or accept payment of such maximum benefits as provided by the Bill unless accepted in writing by the Governor of the State. This Bill will be debated and acted upon in the Senate and must then go to the House.