



NATIONAL RECOVERY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 28, 1933.

BLUE EAGLE DIVISION, RECOVERY BOARDS SECTION

BLUE EAGLE LETTER NO. 4

Our last letter mentioned two phases of the President's Reemployment Program. General Johnson, in his radio speech of Sunday night, August 27, said in part:

"The first step is for every employer to adopt the Blue Eagle. The Roosevelt unity plan * * * simply cannot go forward with any considerable number of employers standing aside and taking advantage of the patriotism of their competitors.

"Why are there any employers not under the Blue Eagle?

"The big trouble is lack of information. You must explain what the President's program means. * * * it is your task -- patiently and courteously to carry out that duty.

"A second obstacle is the fear of honest patriotic men that they cannot do what the President asks and remain in business. What they do not understand is that by getting a certificate from his local Chamber of Commerce or Merchants' Association that he cannot comply, any man is entitled to get and display a provisional Blue Eagle while an investigation is made by the National Recovery Administration. That should be explained so that nobody in the country is in the dark about it.

"Any violence -- even any critical comment or unkind words in this effort is repugnant to its whole purpose and volunteer workers have no right to use such means. -- I beseech you to follow these rules."

You should read the entire speech which is being mailed you today. Soon this duty will have been performed and thereafter the first phase of this program will be drawing to a close. Then there will be time to take up the second phase.

Between these two phases there should be a period of tolerance.

Blue Eagle Letter No. 3 mentions some of the things for which Washington has recently been asked by NRA Local Committees to delegate specific authority. These include:

- Organize arbitration boards.
- Authority to enforce PRA as they think right.
- Authority to remove the Blue Eagle when the signer
(in their opinion) fails to comply.

Such requests indicate that the people in certain sections have quickly caught the patriotic fervor to do what to them seems needful to restore prosperity. In all cases we assume the motives were of the highest. One can only infer from the questions listed in our last letter and summarized above that some municipalities are all set to go with an enforcement scheme, more or less of their own devising. But they ask specific or blanket authority and we delay action until some plan can be evolved.

Meanwhile, two NRA Local Committees are inclined to think that they are being embarrassed because we request delay in enforcement of their plans. These Committees had not apprised us in advance of their intention to set up tribunals. Our first notice came when the authority to enforce was asked, because no doubt it was believed certain cases in their communities merited prompt punishment. The initiative was commendable; but proposed action was too sudden. In one case -- the intent was to enforce a price agreement locally set up; in another it was to enforce hours for opening and closing. To the former we replied:

PRICE FIXING

"It would seem you assume that the PRA has been violated because you cannot enforce uniform prices agreed upon locally. The President's Agreement was not intended to regulate prices. The genesis of the campaign is to enlist employers and employees under the Blue Eagle. That mobilization is still in process. Keep uppermost before the people our major objective namely to fly the Eagle and not the fact that a few chiselers go temporarily unnoticed. It is our understanding that these will be dealt with when the time arrives."

This makes it clear that nothing is to be gained by seeking to enforce locally made price compacts on the assumption that authority is to be found under the President's Reemployment Agreement.

FIXING HOURS FOR OPENING STORES

There have been some misunderstandings on this score. Occasionally groups of merchants in smaller communities have endeavored to reduce store hours to fit the hours of labor in the President's Agreement thus completely overlooking and defeating the purpose of the Agreement. There have been other cases when efforts have been made by some merchants in a given trade area to enforce uniform hours on all of the stores therein by securing the passage of local ordinances. Some of the latter would have violated the spirit of the PRA. To those asking authority to enforce what each thought right in this class of cases, we have replied:

"NRA has no authority, nor have any of its representatives authority to instruct local governments as to what they shall or shall not put into effect. Ordinances intended to accomplish store hour regulations should be discouraged by announcement NRA policy with regard to store hours when an attempt to reduce amounts to a disregard of the spirit of the PRA."

By relating incidents like those above you receive some indication of the trend toward quick interpretations and direct punishment. We counsel against precipitate or punitive action and ask your forbearance. This is in line with General Johnson's radio speech of last night,

"Remember that you are patient missionaries and neither snoopers nor policemen. You will find bewilderment, some misinformation and (in the rarest of cases), resistance — With the latter you have nothing to do. Your sole duty is as of the duties of the Disciples:

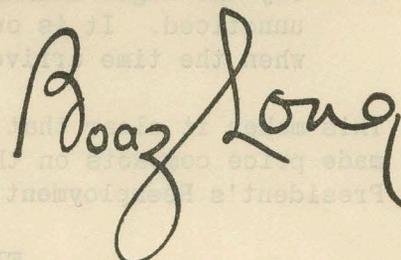
'Whoever shall not receive you nor heed your words, when ye depart out of that house, shake off the dust of your feet'."

Our No. 3 letter suggests that written records of complaints should be kept — we even ask that these be assorted — maybe you already have some based on price fixing or store hours.

DISTRICT AND STATE RECOVERY BOARDS

have sent in requests for precise information about what they are to do. About the time the first phase of the plan has been concluded, information and advices should be sent you that will give more detail. Frankly we wish to make a survey of the progress of events, and endeavor to get some idea of what has been accomplished, before suggesting future plans.

Very truly yours,



BOAZ LONG, CHIEF
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FIXING HOURS FOR OPENING STORES