salaries in their working years to lay aside anything to ameliorate the agonies of age. They have to hole up with children, other relatives, or charitable institutions to hold together at all.

Government statistics, which cannot afford to err to any appreciable extent, inform us that the average income of those who have jumped the 65 year barricade amounts to the super-colossal sum of $960 a year, or a measly 80 bucks a month. Social security, old age pensions, and private pension programs are all being drawn upon to brighten the somber side of the social picture, and keep something resembling life in the aging carcasses.

Currently 9,000,000 people are getting monthly insurance checks from the Social Security Administration. These payments average $74.00 per month for workers without dependents, $68.00 for widows, and $126.00 for a retired couple. Under the terms of the Social Security Act federal grants to states are authorized to supplement the meagre allotments to the needy aged. Annuities and private pensions make up shortages in some directions.

About half a million elders are cooped up in old peoples' homes, nursing homes, and other city dumps where they can pass the time twiddling their thumbs, staring at gray, cold ceilings, and wondering whether it is beans or spaghetti that will decorate the festive board at the impending meal.

The picture gets gloomier the more we concentrate on it. And what is being done by our politicians and statesmen to change the color and direction of the social scene? We hear much of bi-partisanship in the Capital. But social ignorance seems to be the only real bi-partisan policy. It applies to them from top to bottom. When those who occupy the highest positions can formulate no solution, it's reasonable to suppose that those lower down the scale are minus means for social betterment.

A few years ago President Coolidge made the brilliant observation that "when many workers are out of jobs for a definite period unemployment results." We should say it would.

President Hoover envisioned a couple of Plymouth Rocks in every pot, and a couple of Chevrolets in every garage only a few months before an economic crash that in many cases wiped out pots and garages, as well as their mythical contents.

President Roosevelt, out of the experience gained from a long and unique career, evolved the profound conclusion that "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

President Truman decided that a condition of 3 to 4 million unemployed was a healthy state of affairs as it kept the rest of the people on their toes to hold their jobs.

President Eisenhower could see the perfect picture of social security only inside the jails and prisons. All of them are fitful followers of the inquisitive Queen who asked why, if the workers couldn't get bread, they should be prevented from sinking their fangs into a hunk of vitamin-enriched, non-fattening, habit-forming, dietically-perfect cake?

Our learned legislators in the Capital simulate concern for the old folks' welfare. They proffer heaps of remedies but all are ineffective. They don't take.

One of the temporary solutions, continually stressed, is that jobs be provided for those who are physically fit, even when they are past 65. The Federal Council on Aging says that millions of older people find it both necessary and desirable to continue working at some kind of paying job. Compulsory retirement has forced them out of their lifelong career jobs, but they must find part time work in other fields.

A job not only supplies them with a source of income but, being bossed and exploited for so many years, the procedure has penetrated their systems to such an extent that they feel much more contented if they can still be drained of a little of the life force they once possessed.



For several years the U. S. Employment Service has been pushing an "older worker" program to help men and women over 65 to find suitable jobs. They try hard to promote the idea that senior citizens are even better than young workers in many types of jobs. They give top priority to older workers because of loyalty, judgment, experience, and reliability, as well as other desirable characteristics.

But their counsel and advice has not been heeded. The wide awake employers are aware that young workers suit them better. They are quicker on the move, more responsive to stimuli, easier to mold into the firm's activities, more adaptable to customer requirement, they can discuss baseball, prize fighting, dances, and hotrods while the buyer assays the merchandise offered.

Even when one oldster is found who can measure up to the stock criterion, he is immediately under suspicion. How come that he is physically fit at his age? There is only one logical answer—he didn't work hard enough at the jobs he held in his youth, and if he was no good then, he is even worse now. The wholesale adoption of senior citizens into industry is definitely out.

We have taken soundings, and made close observations of the aged group in this locality. It is likely synonymous with that of the nation as a whole.

They congregate in eating spots where a stack of toast costs a nickel, and a bowl of mush retails at a dime. They swap scratch sheets, and play like mad, but just on paper. When they talk of going "across the water" it doesn't imply a leisurely sea cruise to the happy haunts of Tokyo, or Manila. It simply means a short trip over the bay to Oakland. Their lives are a string of drab and sordid events, and capitalism seems bent on keeping them so.

J. A. McDONALD

San Francisco, Calif.

# Two Dollars

Two dollars is not a great deal of money. In these inflationary times it is not only a modest amount, but is becoming ever more insignificant.

There are still a few things you can do with two dollars. You can take it to the small depositer's window at the friendly race track and place it on the nose of a bangtail that never even experienced the thrill of a photo finish.

You can add a dollar to it and buy a ticket on the Irish sweepstakes which provides you with a period of nervous expectancy 'til you are confronted with the drab results.

You can subtract a dollar from it and gain entrance to a movie where romance, horror, sadism, or fantasy percolate in your cranium for a couple of hours.

These alternatives invariably leave you with less money, more experience, and nothing gained.

We have another suggestion for more profitable investment. A little speculation that will help equip you to better understand yourself, your class, and the society you live in. This means a Socialist education.

We have in mind two Socialist papers — *The Socialist Standard* — official organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and *The Western Socialist*—official organ of the World Socialist Party of the United States and the Socialist Party of Canada. Both of these can be had for a full year for the two dollars we were talking about, and both can be obtained by writing to:

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We are confident the results will be different.

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