

In the last three years, the victims of drug-related shootings have included the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Guadalajara, a crusading police chief of Tijuana, two former state prosecutors and more than a dozen active and retired federal police officials.

TRADE PACT HELPS ALL ENTREPRENEURS

Law enforcement officials say more and more drug cargoes are moving through Mexico into the United States as part of the widening flow of legal commerce between the two countries.

Clinton Administration officials insist that the 19-month-old trade agreement has not quickened the flow of drugs through Mexico. But United States Customs Service officials acknowledge that the smugglers are moving more of their drugs into the United States taking advantage of rising truck traffic and a falling rate of inspections.

[From the New York Times, July 31, 1955]

TO HELP KEEP MEXICO STABLE, U.S. SOFT-
PEDALED DRUG WAR

(By Tim Golden)

Concerned for Mexican stability and the fate of the North American Free Trade Agreement, officials said, the United States often exaggerated the Mexican Government's progress in the fight against drugs, playing down corruption and glossing over failures.

Above all, though, American officials said they were kept in check by the desire of the Clinton and Bush Administrations to keep problems of drugs and corruption from jeopardizing the trade accord and the new economic partnership it symbolized.

"People desperately wanted drugs not to become a complicating factor for Nafta," said John P. Walters, a senior official for international drug policy in the Bush White House. "There was a degree of illicit activity that was just accepted."

Mexican and American officials also acknowledged that at least half a dozen top-level traffickers, including the man now considered Mexico's most powerful cocaine smuggler, Amado Carrillo Fuentes, were arrested during the Salinas Government and quietly freed by corrupt judges or the police.

A MODEST INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE WOULD BOOST THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I was troubled, although not surprised, recently when I learned of the plans of a company in my district to relocate certain of its production to other places and to eliminate or relocate about 1,000 jobs, over a 5-year period.

The downsizing of this plant is part of a disturbing trend that is sweeping the Nation.

According to recent, credible news reports, across America, corporate profits are soaring, while wages remain stagnant and consumer spending continues to slow. Despite profits that are at a 45-year high, Businessweek magazine reports that a "hard-nosed, cost-cutting philosophy * * * has spread through executive suites in the 1990s."

Although the fine details surrounding the company in my district's decision have not been revealed, a press re-

lease from the company indicates that their goal is to ensure the "supply of the highest quality medicines in the most cost-efficient manner." The press release also indicates that many of the operations at the plant "will be transferred to other sites around the world."

Far too often these days, the need for greater efficiency and the consideration of other locations has meant that corporations have sought cheaper labor venues.

The Businessweek article recounts the decision by a company, founded and based in Milwaukee since 1909, that decided to move 2,000 jobs to other States where lesser wages could be paid.

The Washington Post made findings similar to Businessweek in a recent, published article. Citing data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Post confirmed that productivity and profits are rising, but workers pay and benefits is the smallest since 1981.

According to the Post, workers pay has "been falling on an inflation-adjusted basis for nearly 20 years." It is understandable that business would seek to be more competitive by cutting costs and reducing payrolls. But, this approach can be short-sighted with other considerations.

The Post article quotes Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, who observed that, "workers are also consumers, and at some point American workers won't have enough money in their pockets to buy all the goods and services they are producing."

Ultimately, the operations at the plant in my district and others that produce the various products, are financed by the very workers who now face job loss and relocation.

The gap in income is growing between those who have a lot of money and those who have less or little money. That is unacceptable.

According to an earlier article in Business Week, the income gap "hurts the economy." Almost half of the money in America is in the hands of just 20 percent of the people. That top 20 percent is made up of families with the highest incomes. The bottom 20 percent has less than 5 percent of the money in their hands. A modest increase in the minimum wage could help the bottom 20 percent, and, it will not hurt the top 20 percent.

But, more importantly, a modest increase in the minimum wage will result in increases in other wages, and ultimately a lifting of the standard of living for all workers, a narrowing of the income gap between the very rich and other Americans and a boost to the economy.

The Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released a report entitled, "A Profile of the Working Poor, 1993." In that report the Bureau found that in 1993, 1 in 5 or 8.2 million of the 40 million people in poverty in this Nation, had a job.

The study further pointed out that the poverty rate for the families of

working people in America is 7.5 percent, a rate that has been increasing over the past 4 years.

Most disturbing, children, according to the report, were present in 85 percent of all poor families with at least one worker.

Between 1980 and 1992, income for the top 20 percent increased by 16 percent. During that same period, income for the bottom 20 percent declined by 7 percent. For the first 10 of those 12 years, between 1980 and 1990, there were no votes to increase the minimum wage. Without an increase in the minimum wage, those with little money end up with less money. That is because the cost of living continues to rise.

Mr. Speaker, that amount of money makes a big difference in the ability of families to buy food and shelter, to pay for energy to heat their homes, and to be able to clothe, care for and educate their children. That amount of money makes the difference between families with abundance and families in poverty. An increase in the minimum wage would not provide abundance, but I can raise working families out of poverty.

An increase in the minimum wage can be the kind of spark the economy needs to get moving again.

It makes little sense to discuss welfare reform when working full time does not make a family any better off than being on welfare full time. Work should be a benefit. It should not be a burden. Work is a burden when, despite an individual's best effort, living is an unrelenting, daily struggle. Work is a benefit when enough is earned to pay for essentials.

In addition, a recent study indicates that job growth in America is lowest where the income gap is widest. Closing the gap helps create jobs rather than reduce jobs. Those who argue that an increase in the minimum wage will cause job losses, fail to look at the facts. The fact is that not increasing the minimum wage has caused job losses.

Mr. Speaker, there are 117,000 minimum wage workers in North Carolina. Those workers are not just numbers. They are people, with families and children.

They are farmers and food service workers, mechanics and machine operators. They are in construction work and sales, health and cleaning services, and a range of other occupations. Their families helped build this Nation, and they can help rebuild it.

They do not need charity, they need a chance. A chance is a modest increase in the minimum wage. We should reward work, Mr. Speaker, stimulate the economy and lift this Nation up. We have time for Waco and Whitewater, let us make time for wages.

TRAVEL EXPENSES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of may