

(Dressings)
Proposed
Statement

PROPOSED STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT UPON
SIGNING THE EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1946

Occasionally, as we pour through the pages of history we are struck by the fact that some incident, little noted at the time, profoundly affects the whole subsequent course of events. I venture the prediction that history, someday, will so record the enactment of the Employment Act of 1946.

In voicing this bold opinion, I am not, of course, basing my conviction upon the mere words or phrases used in this full employment act. Of far greater significance is the fact that this legislation gives articulate expression to a deep-seated desire on the part of the American people for a conscious and positive attack upon the perennial problem of mass unemployment and ruinous depression.

Today, by virtue of this Act, we have for the first time in this nation's history proclaimed officially the clear-cut responsibility of the Government for full employment, full production and high purchasing power. Today, by this act, your Government has pledged its vast resources to create and maintain "useful employment opportunities, including self-employment, for those able, willing, and seeking to work". Today, we have not only announced this official government policy of full employment, but, equally important, concrete machinery has been established in both the Congress and the Executive Branch of the Government for the purpose of translating this policy into reality.

Of course, neither this legislation nor the machinery it established will automatically give this nation full employment and full production. That objective must be earned by the concerted efforts and cooperation of the Federal government, industry, agriculture, labor, and State and local governments. But this legislation does give us a clear-cut declaration of national policy which should enable us to attain our objectives—if we have the will and courage to try.

For my part, I am confident of our ultimate success. This nation's past—and recent past—is blazoned with victories against the seemingly impossible. And they have been victories won without surrendering the American way of life. We now have set our sights on full employment; that goal, too, will be achieved.

Experience, too, may demonstrate ways and means by which we can improve this legislation and implement its high objectives. If this should prove to be the case, I am confident that both the legislative and executive branches of the Government will approach the problem sympathetically.

I congratulate the members of both houses of the Congress and their leaders upon their splendid efforts on behalf of this full employment legislation. They can well be proud of their constructive achievement.