

Self-Serving Solons Attacked At COPE Parley

Despite the end of cross filing, which was designed to stimulate party responsibility, many state legislators ignored party platforms and compromised with special interests in the hope of personal political advancement during the 1963 legislative session, Albin J. Gruhn, California Labor COPE President, told delegates to a recent two-day Alameda County COPE Workshop in Oakland.

As a result, Gruhn said, one of the most frequently encountered sayings in labor circles today is:

"Save us from our friends."

"While it is a matter of record that we may have more friends among the Democrats than among the Republicans, the trouble is we don't have enough real friends in either party," Gruhn asserted.

Touching briefly on the 1963 legislative session, Gruhn called the delegates' attention to the fact that some labor-backed bills got through some committees only with the help of Republican votes while other measures of paramount importance to organized labor, such as the bill to outlaw professional strikebreakers and the bill to guarantee hospital workers the right to organize, were stymied in a committee dominated by Democrats.

While warning against any frontal assault on Democrats in general, Gruhn declared:

"We've got to clean house . . . to develop our political muscle. . . . This can

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State Jobless Rate Stays at 6.3% Peak; U.S. Rate Edges Up to 5.6% in September

Both state and federal seasonally adjusted jobless rates in September remained relatively unchanged from a month earlier but the number of Californians jobless last month was 349,000 or 29,000 higher than in September, 1962, and the over-the-year increase in employment fell way behind the state's new job needs, a report issued jointly by two state agencies indicated this week.

Fair Shake Urged For Handicapped

"We're all handicapped by the limits of our skills, education and intelligence," Thos. L. Pitts, a member of the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, declared today, "but those with physical handicaps obviously have more of a hurdle to clear than others."

"The fact that so many manage to clear that extra high hurdle is a

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THOS. L. PITTS
Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

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Pitts Punctures Pet Myths Peddled by Big Growers To Sell Bracero Extension

Every one of the "pet myths circulated today by agribusinessmen in their devious efforts to prolong the bracero program" was exploded this week by Thos. L. Pitts, State AFL-CIO leader, who particularly attacked their claims that the demise of the program would result in a significant rise in food prices or harm related industries.

"This simply is not so," Pitts declared, and he referred to some very recent history to prove his point to Congressmen who are being "taken in by the growers' myths."

Taking the tomato crop, which is often cited by corporate farm interests as a case in point, Pitts declared:

"We know of no crop where the effects of wage raises due to the removal of braceros would have less of an impact upon consumer prices than in the case of tomatoes . . .

"The labor costs involved in cul-

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Jobless Benefits Suffer Cutback in 12 States in 1963

In terms of unemployment insurance programs, state legislatures throughout this year turned in their worst performance since the jobless pay program was initiated in 1937 according to Ray Munts, assistant director of the National AFL-CIO Social Security Department.

Jobless pay benefits were actually reduced in 12 states, Munts pointed out in a recent radio interview.

"The frequency and persistence of long term unemployment, particularly among Negroes facing job discrimination, is serious enough, but it becomes a social calamity when jobless benefits are also choked off," Munts said.

These reductions, he said, "will further aggravate the growing feeling of national unrest."

In California organized labor fought off bills to cut benefits by as much as \$50 million a year. Both the minimum jobless and disability benefit levels were increased from \$10 to \$25 per week, but the bulk of organized labor's legislative program to improve and broaden aid to the unemployed was scuttled by state legislative leaders.

Munts said that 1963 is the first year since the start of the program that jobless benefits and their duration have been cut back. Six southern states lead all the rest in the proportion of jobless workers who suffer loss of benefits be-

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Pitts Punctures Pet Myths Peddled by Big Growers To Sell Bracero Extension

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tivating and harvesting tomatoes have been in the vicinity of \$10 a ton in recent years. During this period the price received by growers has ranged from \$22 to \$30 a ton. This same ton retails for \$250 or more, as anyone can readily verify by pricing a can of tomatoes at their local supermarket.

"In other words," Pitts explained, "farm labor costs represent four percent of the cost to the housewife. Even a 100 percent increase in wage rates, therefore, would at the most result in a one cent increase for a two-pound can of tomatoes at the consumer level."

A price increase of these dimensions is not going to revolutionize the tomato consumption habits or cause a national upheaval from the standpoint of relocating existing cannery facilities and tomato fields," Pitts said in letters sent to several Congressmen recently.

We have "every reason to believe that the harvest of tomatoes by domestic workers at decent wage rates will have very minor consequences upon tomato production and consumption, he stated.

Moreover, he added, "major wage increases to tomato harvest workers, while resulting in little if any price increase to consumers, would have a profound impact upon the price received by the growers."

"Early in 1961," Pitts recalled, "the San Joaquin Valley tomato growers and canners were confronted with the strong probability that the full focus of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee would be upon their industry after completion of its organizing activities in other parts of the state."

Coupled with the AWOC threat in the farmer's mind, Pitts said, was a series of new U.S. Department of Labor interpretations of the law which led the growers to believe that they would be faced with a much more effective administration of the bracero program than in the past.

"These developments took place at a time when the canners, despite inten-

sive price negotiations on the part of the tomato producers, refused to give a nickel more than \$22 or \$23 a ton. Such an offering by the canners was in fact consistent with the depressed average price of \$23.40 which they had paid during 1950-60 . . .

"Suddenly the picture changed completely. In anticipation of the need to pay much higher wages than in the past, the growers flatly took the position that they would not enter into tomato contracts at the offered price. Convinced that the growers were in earnest, the obstinate position of the canners totally collapsed with the result that an average price of \$30.20 resulted for 1961 compared to a price of \$23.40 in 1960."

Noting that these figures could be confirmed on page 295 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Agricultural Statistics, 1962," Pitts pointed out that they indicate that the cost of tomatoes to the canner was more than 30 percent higher in 1961 than in 1960.

But the figures also indicate that the grower received more than 30 percent more for his crop in 1961 than he did in 1960, he said.

Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, also asserted that fears that demise of the bracero program would result in reduced production and more unemployment among cannery workers were unfounded. Despite the increase in cost to canners the production of processing tomatoes in California "rose to a level of 150,000 acres in 1961 as compared to only 130,000 acres in 1960 and an average of 117,830 acres during the 1950-59 period," he observed.

Returning to the impact of these events on consumer prices, Pitts observed that page 353 of the "Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1962," indicates that "a No. 303 can of tomatoes in March 1962 retailed at a national average price of 15.8 cents as compared to 16.2 cents for March, 1961."

Thus, despite an increase of more than 30 percent in the cost of tomatoes to the canner in 1961, the national average retail price not only did not rise as would be expected but, on the contrary, it actually declined by more than two percent, he pointed out.

"In short, every one of the pet myths circulated today by the agribusiness spokesmen is thoroughly contradicted by actual happenings during the only year in recent history providing some factual basis for measuring the effects of higher wages for tomato harvest workers in California," Pitts declared.

The State AFL-CIO leader urged the Congressmen to re-examine their position in the hope that in the light of the events of 1961 they would oppose any further extension of the bracero program.

Boycott Appeal Withdrawn

Successful conclusion of a seven-week strike against the General Mills Plant at Lodi has resulted in the withdrawal of the appeal made last month by Fred W. Eichler, President of Local 59 of the American Federation of Grainmillers, for a consumer boycott of General Mills products such as Wheaties, Kix, and Betty Crocker cake mixes. Eichler called on all unions and central bodies that had taken any action to implement his appeal to rescind it. The firm acceded to the union's demands for safe working conditions and a significant wage increase, he said.

Solons Attacked At COPE Parley

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only be done on a truly non-partisan basis . . .

Gruhn repudiated as "a bunch of hooley" inferences drawn by some newspaper columnists to the effect that labor was so disenchanted with Democrats as a group that they were about to embrace the Republicans as a group.

"This would be totally out of keeping with labor's non-partisan tradition," he declared.

However, he added: "Labor is tired of being the tail that gets dragged around by the Democrats."

"The only way we can compete with the 400 to 500 lobbyists in Sacramento, some loaded with loot, is to build up our political muscle by registering our own members," Gruhn declared.

In some areas, he pointed out, only 40 to 50 percent of union members are registered to vote, he said.

"The politicians know it," and they vote accordingly, he warned.

Gruhn also pointed out that between 20 and 25 percent of California's union membership are registered Republicans. This means that some primary endorsements should be considered for the better GOP candidates, particularly those who are under attack from the right-wing.

JFK Signs Bill To Bolster Railroad Retirement Fund

A bill to assure continued payment of full retirement and disability benefits to the nation's railroad workers from the government-administered Railroad Retirement Fund was signed into law this week by President Kennedy.

The measure, voluntarily worked out by labor and management in the railroad industry, will raise the earning base on which taxes for the fund are levied from \$400 to \$450 per month. Both the employee and the employer pay a 7¼ percent tax on earnings up to the base period.

Fallout Shelter Funds Killed

A \$195 million AFL-CIO-backed fallout shelter construction program which was authorized by the House of Representatives on September 17 was slashed out of the Civil Defense budget this week by the House Appropriations Committee. The committee approved \$87.8 million to operate and maintain established civil defense programs.

Employers Urged To Give Even Break To Handicapped

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tribute not only to themselves but to the tenacity of the human spirit," he said in calling attention to "Employ the Handicapped Week," October 6-12.

Pointing out that organized labor has "consistently marched in the vanguard of the forces within the nation seeking equality of rights for individuals — whether the issues have been wages and hours for workers, or equal rights for minority groups or the consuming public at large," Pitts declared:

"The labor movement is particularly concerned with the plight of handicapped workers because, whether out of sensitivity to their handicap or a desperation born of their economic straits, they are an easy target for exploitation.

"Organized labor, however, is concerned with more than merely maintaining employment standards in projects for the handicapped. It is unequivocally committed to the concept of equal pay for equal work regardless of extraneous circumstances.

"So we in the state AFL-CIO take this opportunity to urge employers and their personnel managers to give the physically handicapped an equal opportunity in today's increasingly competitive job market," Pitts, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, said.

"Right now," he added, "the nation's economy itself is handicapped by its inability to create enough jobs to employ fully the manpower and womanpower available within the nation.

"This is due in large measure to Congressional inaction and timidity. But it is also due to the apathy and inaction resulting from a lack of recognition by society generally of the snowballing peril that the accelerating pace of automation and technological change poses.

"While we join this week with others in appealing to employers to bear in mind throughout the year that the physically handicapped are competent, capable and anxious to perform many varied tasks, we feel obligated in the same breath to point out that the physically handicapped and minority groups are both short-changed in a job-poor economy," Pitts said.

In a report dispatched to the State Employment Security Agencies last month, the U.S. Employment Service pointed out that its placements of handicapped persons have not kept pace with the ever-increasing work load.

"During fiscal 1963," the report said, "handicapped placements dropped to 272,425, while new applications rose to

UI and DI Benefit Minimums Rise

Three measures enacted by the 1963 legislature to boost the minimum unemployment and disability benefits from \$10 to \$25 a week and another that imposes fines on employers who wilfully make false statements concerning their reasons for terminating an employee's employment are now on the books.

The new laws reflect the bare bones of the basically unproductive 1963 general session of the California legislature in the social insurance field.

Jobless or disabled workers who filed claims after September 20 will receive the increased benefits, Albert B. Tieburg, State Director of Employment, explained. During the first full year of operation of the program it is estimated that about \$3 million in additional benefits will be paid to some 96,000 claimants.

The first benefit checks reflecting the \$25 minimum were paid last Monday.

The measure imposing penalties on employers wilfully making false statements regarding a claimant's termination of employment (AB 624) is based on a measure sponsored by the State AFL-CIO. It is designed to discourage employers from attempting to disqualify employees with legitimate claims for jobless benefits in order to protect the employer's reserve account.

The Act provides that an employer's reserve account may be charged with a penalty of not less than two nor more than 10 times the maximum weekly benefit amount (\$110 to \$550) if the Director of the Department of Employment finds that the employer or his employee, officer, or agent wilfully makes a false statement or representation or wilfully fails to report a material fact concerning a claimant's termination of employment in submitting facts to obtain a ruling under Sections 1030 or 3701.

463,252 and the vocational rehabilitation referrals increased over five percent from fiscal year 1962.

"Therefore, looking to National Employ the Handicapped Week 1963, local employment service offices face a serious challenge and need to establish higher levels of placement activity if we are to keep pace with current and future developments," the report said.

ILO To Establish 'Clearing House' On Automation

A significant step toward coping with the on-rushing problems of automation was taken this week with the announcement of plans to set up a world clearing house for information on its social and economic consequences.

The clearing house will be operated by the International Labor Organization, an organization formed in 1919 which has since become a specialized agency of the United Nations.

Decision to set up the clearing house followed an agreement reached by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to make experiences with automation available to the clearing house. The Soviet Union's decision to permit ILO researchers to inspect automated processes on the spot and to interview Russian technicians is regarded as a departure from the previous Soviet policy of secrecy in such areas.

David A. Morse, ILO director general, delineated the dilemma posed by automation very succinctly. On the one hand, he said, it is essential that automation and other technological advances be introduced rapidly if the world is to be able to produce enough to provide for its rapidly growing population.

On the other hand, if measures are not taken to soften the impact of automation on workers, unemployment is liable to soar to alarming proportions, he explained.

To date, industrial countries are handling this latter aspect "very badly" he said.

Asserting that the issues raised by automation are world issues, Morse observed that automation is likely to spread more rapidly in the underdeveloped countries than is generally supposed. This will be necessary if such countries are to produce enough to provide for their future populations.

Among the paradoxes posed by the advent of automation is that the technology that is most capable of yielding greatest increases in production is least capable of expanding employment, he observed.

One of the principal subjects to be covered in discussions being held this week with labor leaders and State Department officials is what steps should be taken to cope with the economic consequences of disarmament should it materialize to a large degree.

In addition to receiving and disseminating information on automation, the center will also sponsor research projects.

State Jobless Rate Still at 6.3% Peak

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the reopening of schools, and peak activity in the food processing industry.

Although California's total employment increased by 162,000, or 2.5 percent from September, 1962, this growth rate is far below the 200,000 to 220,000 jobs that must be created in California each year to cope with the state's annual population increase of more than 600,000 persons.

In reporting the jobless figures, Albert B. Tieburg, Director of the Department of Employment, noted that the state's civilian labor force exceeded seven million for the first time. At 7,006,000, the labor force, which consists of the employed and the unemployed available for and seeking work, was 191,000 above a year ago.

Total civilian employment in the state rose to a new record of 6,657,000, up 94,000 from August, according to Ernest B. Webb, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations. Most of the additional jobs were in agriculture and government due to the fall acceleration of harvest activities and the opening of the new school year, Webb said. Employment in manufacturing, food processing and missiles showed increases over the previous month but electronics and construction employment declined, he added.

On the national level total employment dropped nearly one million between August and September to 69,546,000. In September, 1962, total employment was 68,668,000.

U.S. Labor Department officials are frankly puzzled by the rise in the jobless rate for women which last month was 5.8 percent, .2 percent above the average national rate.

Harold Goldstein, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics said:

"We really don't have the answer. . . .

Rourke of IBEW Named to Key National COPE Post

Joseph M. Rourke, former secretary-treasurer of the Connecticut State Labor Council and a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, has been appointed deputy director of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education.

Alexander E. Barkan, former deputy director, and more recently Acting Director, was named COPE director earlier last month to replace the late James L. McDevitt.

Rourke, 58, has been an IBEW member since 1928 and has served six terms as a Connecticut State legislator. He assumed his COPE duties in mid-September.

12 States Cut Aid

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fore they find new jobs, Munts said, and he cited figures to prove it.

"Some of the worst unemployment insurance laws are in those states with a high proportion of Negroes. Negroes are hurt more than whites by the shortcomings in jobless pay simply because they are out of work more often than whites — and for reasons beyond their control."

Declaring that federal action is the only alternative if the states bend to pressures from special interest groups to cut benefits, Munts urged the enactment of the McCarthy-King bill which would establish minimum standards for benefit payments and extend benefits up to 52 weeks.

We don't understand the higher rates for women."

The Department pointed out that nearly 40 percent of the nation's labor force consists of women and teenagers. This group accounts for nearly 60 percent of the jobless.

Labor Unions Aid Public Interest

"Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and supplied supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor. But their work goes beyond their own jobs, and even beyond our borders.

"Our unions have fought for aid to education, for better housing, for development of our national resources, and for saving the family-sized farms. They have contributed funds and talent to improve our overseas relations. They have spoken, not for narrow, self-interest, but for the public interest and for the people.

"For the labor movement is people. Our unions have brought millions of men and women together, made them members of one another, and given them common tools for common goals.

"Their goals are goals for all America — and their enemies are the enemies of progress. The two cannot be separated." — John F. Kennedy.

O'Connell Named to Post on Industrial Accident Board

John A. O'Connell, a former San Francisco Assemblyman, has been appointed to serve on the Industrial Accident Commission by Governor Edmund G. Brown.

O'Connell, who was unsuccessful in an attempt to unseat Representative William S. Mailliard last year, succeeded Joseph G. Kennedy who was recently appointed to the San Francisco Municipal Court.

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