

Defeated Senate Candidate Sues Birch Society

Robert Battin, the COPE-endorsed candidate for State Senator in Orange County last November who was defeated by John Schmitz, an avowed member of the John Birch Society, filed suit this week for \$2.5 million damages.

Battin, who underwent a citizen's arrest at the hands of one of Schmitz' campaign aides two days before the election, charged false arrest and conspiracy to commit false arrest in the suit filed in Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana on Monday. The suit asks \$2 million in punitive damages and \$500,000 in "direct and proximate" damages.

Named in the suit were: the John Birch Society; Robert Welch, its founder and leader; John Rousselot, the society's national publicity director; State Senator Schmitz (R-Tustin); and Frank La Magna, the staff man for Schmitz who made the citizen's arrest of Battin.

Battin said La Magna had falsely accused him of assault with a deadly weapon (his automobile). La Magna claimed that Battin had tried to hit him with his car. The day after Battin's arrest and booking at the county jail, the District Attorney dropped the charge, holding that there was insufficient evidence.

Battin maintains that his arrest and imprisonment resulted from the "deliberate malice" of La Magna and that it damaged his reputation just before the election.

He said it not only caused his defeat

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Federation Launches Fund Drive to Aid Thousands Left Homeless by Floods

An appeal for funds to aid the thousands left homeless by the Northern California flood disaster was sent out to more than 1600 AFL-CIO local unions and councils in California this week by state AFL-CIO leader Thos. L. Pitts. Pointing out that the Red Cross estimates that it will take some \$5 million to help get these families back to their former standard

Legislature Still Unorganized

The California legislature, preoccupied with the thorny and politically explosive problems of reapportionment and new tax sources, neared the end of its second week still largely unorganized.

On the Assembly side only the Rules Committee has been appointed and in the Senate no committee posts had been announced at press time.

Named to the lower house Rules Committee are: James R. Mills (D) Chairman; Joe A. Gonsalves (D); Leo J. Ryan (D); Jerome Waldie (D); Lou Cu-

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Pitts Punctures Claim That Farm Wage Rates Hurt State's Chance to Compete

"The contention that California's growers are placed at a competitive disadvantage with such states as Texas and Arkansas by the Labor Department's wage standards for farm labor is not only fallacious but directly opposite to the truth," AFL-CIO leader Thos. L. Pitts charged today. Taking issue with the demand made over the weekend by California's 15-man GOP Congressional delegation that Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz rescind these standards, which establish minimum conditions to be observed before there can be any possibility of importing farm workers under the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, Pitts declared:

"California's GOP Congressional delegation is way off base in claiming that the Secretary has exceeded his authority by setting the standards. But Wirtz did exceed his authority when he opened up the possibility of any importation program at all because the new standards prevent any

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State's Jobless Rate is Still 1.2% Higher Than U.S.

California's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate backed off from the rain-inflated 6.5 percent posted in November to 6.1 percent in December but was still 1.2 percent greater than the national rate of 4.9 percent, state figures released late last week disclosed.

The California rate, reflecting a decline of only 10,000 in the ranks of the state's 434,000 jobless the previous month despite Christmas season hirings, was three-tenths of a percentage point higher than in December 1963 when 396,000 Californians were unemployed.

The persistent unfavorable gap between the state and national rates underscore the necessity of making significant improvements in the state's jobless pay program, state AFL-CIO leader Thos. L. Pitts commented.

"Under California's present benefit schedule, the current average weekly benefit received by qualified jobless workers is only about \$43. Since the average weekly wage in covered employment is more than \$120, this means that the average weekly benefit amounts to only 36 percent of average weekly earnings.

"With more and more people finding themselves jobless as a result of automation and technological change and a work force that is multiplying faster than the state's growth rate, it should be clear even to those presently employed that any program that provides barely a third of lost wages for a period of unemployment, with no additional

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Pitts Punctures Claim That Farm Wage Rates Hurt State's Chance to Compete

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genuine competition by the growers for labor on the same basis as all other industries in the nation," Pitts said.

To substantiate his view that California growers are benefitted rather than hurt by the new wage standards, he pointed out that the standards were based on the Labor Department's 1962-63 adverse effect standards that had applied to the bracero program. Under these standards, which were based on the so-called prevailing wage in each state, growers wishing to import foreign labor were required first to offer certain minimum rates to domestic farm workers.

"These rates, which were so abysmally low the agribusiness interests were satisfied with them, were 60 cents in Arkansas, 70 cents in Texas and \$1 in California. The new rates going into effect April 1 will require Texas and Arkansas growers to offer \$1.15 and California to offer \$1.40.

"Thus, while California growers are being called on to raise their rates only 40 percent, Texas growers are required to raise their rates more than 64 percent and Arkansas growers more than 91 percent.

"This clearly demonstrates that Wirtz' order is not a bane but a boon to California's corporate growers because it has narrowed the interstate differential in California's favor," Pitts, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, declared.

"Under the bracero program, California growers had to pay 30 cents more than Texas growers and 40 cents more than Arkansas growers before they could qualify to import braceros. The new rate narrows this differential to only 25 cents, thereby substantially improving California's interstate competitive advantage.

POSITION UNTENABLE

"The state's agribusiness interests," he pointed out, "should have had the decency to point this out to our elected Republican representatives before stampeding them into such a brash and patently untenable position," he asserted.

The AFL-CIO official, commenting on the farm labor situation from Washington where he is attending a national AFL-CIO Legislative Conference, also said that the state GOP delegation's reference to the fact that the federal minimum wage law exempts agricultural workers was "totally irrelevant to the foreign labor import issue."

"I would have hoped that the state's Congressional representatives who got roped into this statement would have taken the trouble to find out that the wage standards apply only to growers who want to import foreign labor. They

do not apply to the more than 99 percent of the nation's growers who do not use braceros.

TAKE A FRESH LOOK

"Large segments of the nation's press, radio and TV facilities have been taken in for far too long by the false threats and phony fears manufactured by the bracero users. It's time they took a fresh look at this issue without an agribusiness spokesman at their elbow.

"If they do this, they will find:

- "1. That hired farm labor wages could be doubled without an appreciable increase in retail food costs.
- "2. That there is no real danger of either severe production cutbacks or a mass migration of agriculture to other areas for the simple reason that few other areas enjoy California's natural advantages of climate, diversity of soils, irrigation and transportation facilities, water supply and long growing season.
- "3. That Mexican farm imports to the United States, which the California GOP Congressional delegation tried to infer were rapidly increasing, have increased relatively little if the nation's population growth is taken into account."

In elaboration of his third point, Pitts asked:

"Isn't it strange that these GOP officeholders who profess such a deep concern over the impact of the bracero program's end on Mexico's economy, can be so alarmed at even a slight indication that Mexico is beginning to strengthen its economy by developing a modern agricultural industry?"

Citing a portion of the Republicans' statement that referred to "the establishment of arbitrarily high minimum wage rates," Pitts said he was extremely disappointed that the state's GOP Congressmen would regard a \$1.40 wage rate as arbitrarily high when it amounts to a gross pay of only \$56 a week for 40 hours labor, particularly in a state where the average weekly wage is more than \$120 for factory workers.

"The truth of the matter is that the corporate farm, processing and banking interests that have perpetuated starvation wage levels for millions of the nation's migrant farm workers for more than a dozen years are fully capable of paying wage levels competitive with other U.S. industries. But if they can reopen their channels to cheap foreign labor they won't have to. And that's what they are trying to do.

"If their scare tactics succeed, the Administration will have turned its back on its own poverty program and the nation's taxpayers will be forced to continue to subsidize the huge corporate farms by paying for the welfare costs that substandard wage rates create," he warned.

Who Voted No On Rules Change

A significant change in House rules which should help clear the way for action on many labor-backed measures heretofore blocked by the conservatively dominated Rules Committee was adopted by a vote of 208 to 201 when Congress convened last week.

California congressmen who joined southern Democrats in voting against the liberalization in the rules were: Baldwin, Bell, Clausen, Clawson, Gubser, Hosmer, Libscomb, Mailliard, Reinecke, Smith, Talcott, Teague, Utt, Bob Wilson and Younger. All are Republicans.

The change enables House Speaker John W. McCormack to bring legislation approved by other committees to the floor for a vote by the full House if the Rules Committee fails to release it within 21 days.

14 Million Women Living in Poverty

An estimated 14 million women 16 years of age and over are among the 35 million persons living in poverty in the United States, according to a U. S. Labor Department Women's Bureau report.

Where are they?

About 10.5 million live in families with incomes of less than \$3,000 a year. They include 6.7 million wives living with their husbands, 2.3 million women family heads, over one-half million daughters 16 and 17 years of age who live at home, and an estimated 1.2 million who live with a relative. In addition, there are 3.5 million who do not live in a family group and who receive less than \$1,500 a year.

According to the report, women living in poverty include those who are poorly educated and unskilled, in poor health or elderly, are members of a minority group, are residents of an economically declining community, and many attempting to rear children in a fatherless home."

Defeated Senate Candidate Sues

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but also damaged him in his business and profession.

Last November Battin filed a \$500,000 false arrest claim against the city but the city denied the claim.

Commenting on the case, Battin's attorney said:

"I feel we have sufficient evidence to tie in the John Birch Society to the arrest. We are going to want to see the John Birch Society membership list for Orange County."

State's Jobless Rate is Still 1.2% Higher Than U.S.

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benefits for dependents, is grossly inadequate," Pitts said.

"What's needed," he added, "is among other things, a significant increase in the taxable wage base on which the program is founded, a meaningful hike in benefits, provision of additional benefits for dependents and permanent extension of eligibility for benefits from 26 to 39 weeks to cope with the needs of our rapidly automating state economy."

The state's civilian labor force, comprised of the employed and the jobless available for and seeking work, totaled 7,174,000 in December or 223,000 more than in December 1963.

Total civilian employment in California last month, at 6,750,000 was 195,000 or 3.0 percent higher than a year ago and 68,000 above the November 1963 level.

The bulk of the job growth, three-fourths of it in fact, was centered in services, trade and government, with the largest share of the November-December increase in retail trade.

Manufacturing employment was the only major job sector in which a decline was registered last month. Here job losses were distributed principally among seasonal manufacturing industries such as canning, lumber, toys and fabricated metals but there were also further job cutbacks in missiles and electronics.

The dip in the U.S. jobless rate to 4.9 percent marked only the third time in more than seven years that the national rate has fallen below 5 percent. It rose to 5.1 percent in November 1957 at the start of the 1958 recession, hit a peak of 7.5 percent in July 1957 and dropped down to 4.9 percent only in February 1960 and July 1964.

For the nation as a whole 3.5 million were unemployed last month, 100,000 more than a month earlier. In December 1963 the U.S. rate was 5.5 percent and 3.8 million were unemployed.

Non-farm employment rose 300,000 to an all time high of 66.3 million last month, although, on the basis of past seasonal experience, little change had been expected.

The U.S. employment rate for adult men was static at 3.5 percent and the rate for adult women dropped from 5.0 to 4.6 percent last month, its lowest point in nearly five years. The teenage jobless rate remained at nearly 15 percent, a level it maintained for most of 1964.

Annual averages for the year reflect

State Legislature Is Not Yet Fully Organized

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sanovich (R); Carl A. Britschgi (R); and R. S. Stevens (R).

As of midweek, 104 bills had been introduced in the Senate and 264 in the Assembly. Among the latter was a bill introduced at the request of Governor Edmund G. Brown by Assemblyman George M. Zenovich (D-Fresno) calling for a temporary increase of one-tenth of one percent in the rate of employee contributions to the State Disability Insurance Fund to assure its solvency.

The Zenovich bill (AB 241) would also require all employers who withhold more than \$50 in disability contributions to remit them to the state on a monthly instead of quarterly basis as it present.

Efforts were understood to be underway to get Lower House concurrence to permit the Governor's bill to be taken up on an emergency basis. Under legislative procedures, no bill may be taken up until 30 days after introduction. A three-fourths vote in the House of introduction is required to take up legislation during this 30 day period which is reserved for public study of legislative proposals. The Federation's bill on unemployment disability insurance problems has not yet been introduced.

The Federation is currently analyzing all bills introduced and the digest and evaluation of measures of primary concern to organized labor will be carried in the NEWS LETTER starting early in February.

some significant improvements in the nation's job picture:

- The annual average jobless rate was 5.2 percent last year compared to 5.7 percent in 1963.

- Total unemployment fell 300,000 to an average of 3.9 million.

- Total employment climbed 1.5 million to 70.4 million, with non-farm jobs rising 1.7 million while farm jobs continued to decline.

- Job growth in 1964 exceeded the expansion in the labor force, which increased by 1.25 million or about 150,000 more than had been predicted.

Included among the employed in 1964, however, were 2.1 million part-time workers. This was the lowest annual level for this category since 1956.

The jobless rate for adult men eased from 4.5 to 3.9 percent last year while the rate for married men fell from 3.4 percent in 1963 to 2.8 percent in 1964, returning to its 1957 level.

But employment among adult women and teenagers showed no improvement since their job gains barely matched their labor force entries.

Aid Urged For 1965 Heart Fund Drive

Wholehearted support for the American Heart Association's annual fund drive next month is being urged by Thos. L. Pitts, executive officer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Pointing out that, thanks in no small measure to the Association's investment of more than \$100 million in research during the past 15 years, the death rate from heart and circulatory diseases has dropped 7.5 percent among men in the 45-64 age bracket since 1950, Pitts called on all local unions and central bodies to give the Heart Association their fullest cooperation, particularly in connection with their door-to-door Heart Sunday drive on February 21.

"Intensified research on the causes of heart and circulatory diseases is essential to develop better drugs and new surgical techniques to keep wage earners from being prematurely crippled by these afflictions. Since the first Heart Fund drive in 1949 the death rate from stroke has been cut by 26 percent and the large majority of persons suffering heart attacks these days survive their first attack with 75 percent being able to return to their jobs.

"In addition, the Association's efforts have also contributed significantly to the development of techniques to correct many inborn heart defects in children.

"It is not only in keeping with the long standing tradition of organized labor's commitment to community service but also in our own best interests and that of our children that we assist the Heart Fund drive in every way possible," Pitts declared.

"We can help by calling on our locals to make contributions, participating in 'in-plant' fund drives, and serving as volunteers on Heart Sunday, February 21," he added.

Pamphlet Tells Benefits Of Group Health Programs

"Group health—a better way to good health care," a booklet describing the aims and functions of group health programs, is now available from the AFL-CIO Pamphlet Division.

The publication, based on the remarks of Caldwell B. Esselstyn, M.D., before the AFL-CIO executive council last year, explores the problems wage earners face in seeking the best possible medical care and spells out the advantages for the consumer as well as for the physician in group health programs.

Single copies of the pamphlet may be obtained from the AFL-CIO Pamphlet Division, 815 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006 for ten cents each. For 100 copies or more the price is \$7.50 per hundred.

Brown Urges Overhaul of Vocational Education Programs at State Parley

Governor Edmund G. Brown this week told nearly a thousand participants at the California State Conference on Vocational Education in Los Angeles that California's vocational education program must be revamped if it is to keep pace with the space age.

The Governor said that he would ask what kind of jobs are going to be available in the future so that vocational educators will know "what kind of training — and what amounts to give which students in which areas of the state."

Elaborating on the concept of a job formula for the future, Brown told the Conference that it would work only "if you in vocational education start looking at your problems the way a systems engineer would — that is, with new thinking, with a fresh approach."

"For too long, too many vocational educators have locked their programs in the past. Unable or unwilling to find out the needs of employers, these educators have been training students for jobs that don't exist. Or worse yet, they have been training them for no jobs at all," Brown declared.

Courses in mechanical drawing, wood-working, auto mechanics and homemaking will not help high school students find jobs on graduation, he said.

"Unfortunately, the only good that comes out of most these courses is the dexterity the students gain by using their hands," he observed.

"But vocational education — by its very title — was not meant to train people to be good at their hobbies. It was meant to train people for a vocation, not an avocation," the Governor added.

On Monday, the opening day of the two-day conference, Seymour Wolfbein, a former AFL-CIO economist who is now director of the U.S. Office of Manpower, Automation and Training, emphasized that "it is clear that a necessary condition of full employment is major improvement of the quality and quantity of vocational education."

This is underscored he said, by the fact that the jobless rate for teenagers seeking work is 15.4 percent compared to 14.7 percent last year.

Paul H. Sheats, Dean of the University of California's Extension Division, suggested that in view of the accelerating pace of automation and the snowballing of our labor force, eight hours of the current 40-hour workweek should be devoted to job education.

The paid time-off should apply equally to "job-related instruction and courses in the humanities, the arts, social sciences or leadership skills," he asserted.

Sheats noted, however, that the "paid learner" program would have to be voluntary because "learning is hard work and not everyone will want to try it."

Training only in narrowly job-related skills without liberal arts courses, Sheats warned, would be bad because "this sort of institutional senility only blocks our way to social advance."

He also called for creation of a National Commission on Continuing Education to be appointed by President Johnson to study the proposal and find out what federal legislation and support would be necessary.

Wilbur Fillippini, vice-president of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, District 5, and John S. Carroll, the Federation's Director of Education, represented the Federation at the conference.

Pitfalls in Grievance Clauses Eyed in Study

A study of grievance procedures in 1,717 major collective bargaining agreements, covering 7.4 million workers, has just been released by the U. S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The study, the first of a series, is planned primarily as an aid to union and management officials and Government mediators who write contract clauses defining grievances and grievance-settling procedures.

It and a companion study of arbitration procedures to be published later are also designed to reveal the gaps or limitations in such procedures which can lead to strikes or lockouts.

The report, entitled "Major Collective Bargaining Agreements: Grievance Procedures," BLS Bulletin 1425-1, is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 45 cents.

Reminder

The California Labor Press Conference will open at 3 p.m. Friday, January 22, at the Marine Cooks and Stewards Center five miles north and nine miles east of Santa Rosa.

Transportation from San Francisco to the center will depart from the Barrett Airport bus service downtown terminal at 375 O'Farrell Street at 3, 4 and 5 p.m. Friday in time to arrive for the opening dinner session at 7 p.m. Details of the conference were spelled out in the January 8 NEWS LETTER.

Birchers Claim Record Growth—Especially Here

The John Birch Society signed up more new members and established more new chapters last month than it had in any other month, according to its national Director of Public Relations John Rousselot, and California had the dubious distinction of providing the most of both.

"California led the nation in new chapters and new members," Rousselot claimed at a news conference in Los Angeles last week. Although maintaining that "the society makes no concerted effort to recruit members of police departments," he said many law enforcement officers have joined the ultra-right wing society.

Fed Launches Fund Drive

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than the Alaskan earthquake of last March but involves the highest rate of personal property destruction in the memory of Red Cross officials.

Pitts said that Red Cross officials had informed him that 5,900 families in northern California had suffered loss, with 1,025 homes totally destroyed, 1,211 suffering major damage and 2,548 minor damage.

Red Cross policy, Pitts explained, is to provide aid in cash with no strings attached in order to revive economic activity in the affected communities as rapidly as possible. At present, he said, no second-hand clothing or bedding is needed.

Noting that the over-all damages resulting from the flood are now estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$250 million, Pitts said that a relatively small investment in dams and other public works projects in northern California could avert a repetition of such disasters in the future.

To substantiate this, he cited estimates released late last month by the Department of Interior that the federally-built Folsom dam prevented at least \$45 million in damages in the Sacramento area. He also pointed out that the U. S. army engineers have reported that the \$42 million dam has paid for itself at a rate of \$2 saved in flood control alone for every \$1 spent in its construction.

"While our primary concern right now is to help the flood victims get back on their feet, it is also well for us to bear in mind that these disasters and the vast losses we, as a society, suffer both in property and lives could be averted — and an enormous number of jobs created — by more adequate public works programs," Pitts declared.