

AT. State Recoups \$4 Million in Back Pay for Workers

More than four million dollars in unpaid wages and \$645,000 in payments owed to employee benefit funds were recovered last year as a result of the work of the Division of Labor Law Enforcement of the State Department of Industrial Relations, State Labor Commissioner Sigmund Arywitz, the Division's Chief, disclosed this week.

In a year-end report to State Industrial Relations Department Director Ernest B. Webb, Arywitz said that his Division had recovered \$4,089,962 for 25,989 individuals who had claimed compensation for work for which they had not been paid during 1964.

This marked the first time anywhere in the United States that more than \$4 million in unpaid wages had been recovered in a year by a state agency, Arywitz asserted.

The report disclosed that the Division's 21 offices throughout the state had handled 63,744 complaints and controversies, including 47,464 involving claims for unpaid wages. The Division held 28,864 hearings, settled 25,989 complaints, and dismissed 19,078, he said.

On the basis of the most recently available statistics, Arywitz added:

"The total of wages recovered in California on such claims exceeds the total of recoveries in the rest of the country."

The report said the Division processed 1,971 complaints of failure to make required payments to employee benefit

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State Senate Fills All Committee Posts; Disability Insurance Bill Hearing Jan. 26

With a sizeable number of the state's key legislative leaders in Washington, D. C. for the inauguration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, the wheels of legislative action in Sacramento moved slowly this week but some progress in organizing the legislature was made and a hearing was scheduled on an urgency measure embodying Governor Brown's disability

insurance proposals (AB 241) before the Assembly Ways and Means Committee next Tuesday at 2 p.m.

The Governor's disability insurance bill, introduced last week by Assemblyman George M. Zenovich (D-Fresno), contains some of the key improvements called for by delegates to the California Labor Federation's Convention in San Francisco last August such as increasing the taxable wage base from \$5600 to \$7500 and requiring monthly remittance of the tax. It also calls for annual escalation of the taxable wage base as average weekly wages increase.

In view of the immediate critical need to assure the solvency of the Disability Insurance Fund, State AFL-CIO leader

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Action Bars Plum For Standard Oil

When labor learned that the Richmond City Council in Contra Costa County had just about decided to give a city gasoline purchase contract to Standard Oil of California, even though it was not low bidder on the contract, it protested vigorously.

Within a week, city councilmen reversed their field after union members alerted them and the public to Standard's insistence on a sub-standard union contract. The council voted 7-0 to give the gasoline contract to Shell Oil

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AFL-CIO Riddles Growers' Claims at Special Hearing on Farm Pay Rates in D.C.

The latest attempt by corporate farm interests to stampede federal officials into sanctioning use of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act to import farm workers came apart at the seams last weekend when AFL-CIO and U. S. Labor Department spokesmen repudiated grower claims point by point at a special hearing set up at the growers' request before the Senate Agriculture Committee in Washington, D. C.

Testifying last Saturday in behalf of the national AFL-CIO and Thos. L. Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, Walter Simcich of the State Federation's Research Department documented repeated instances during the past month which proved not only that adequate domestic farm labor is available but that the corporate growers have engaged in a flagrant attempt to thwart federal-state recruitment efforts so the growers could falsely claim a labor shortage existed.

The hearing was called to determine

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New Rules To Aid State Consumers

More dividends from the California consumers' modest investment in the state Office of Consumer Counsel were disclosed recently when the State Public Utilities Commission adopted new regulations to protect consumers who move within the state and the State Department of Agriculture spelled out new package labeling regulations.

In the past, when a moving company underestimated the charges for an intra-state move and the family was unable to pay the moving bill in full, the furniture was frequently placed in storage instead of unloaded at the home.

Now, however, thanks to the new PUC rules, if the actual bill exceeds the estimate by more than 10 percent, the mover must unload the furniture at the home and give the family a reasonable time—in many cases seven days—to raise the additional money.

Heretofore, if an unscrupulous moving firm grossly underestimated the charges, the family was frequently not only denied access to its own furniture

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Legislative Roster To Go To Press Soon

As soon as all legislative committees have been named and their meeting schedules disclosed, the Federation will go to press with its 1965 roster of California's legislative representatives. One copy of the roster will be sent to all affiliates, Central labor bodies and other organizations interested in obtaining quantities of the roster at their own cost should make arrangements with the Federation's office in San Francisco immediately.

AFL-CIO Riddles Growers' Claims at Special Hearing on Farm Pay Rates in D.C.

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the fairness of wage standards growers must offer to domestic workers before they can claim a labor shortage exists and seek to import foreign workers under the Immigration Act (P.L. 414).

While calling on the Committee to take a "firm stand" against any weakening of the Labor Department's regulations, the AFL-CIO spokesman said the standards were inadequate because they serve "as a ceiling rather than a floor" on the domestic workers' earning ability.

"Once the growers have offered \$1.25 an hour, they can forget about making any further wage offer in the fairly secure knowledge that braceros will be forthcoming if domestic workers are not," he declared.

"By what conceivable stretch of the imagination can this be interpreted as a prevention of adverse effect?" he asked.

"If new braceros were not available under any circumstances and the resolution of differences of opinion regarding wages were left to labor and management to settle alone, as in all other industries, it could not be more apparent that the growers would have to exceed their \$1.25 an hour offer," Simcich asserted.

Governor Edmund G. Brown also rejected the corporate growers claim that a labor shortage exists and, at Senator Ellender's request, sent a wire to the Committee last Friday saying, "As of this date the supply of domestic farm labor has been adequate to meet the needs of California farmers generally.

"From December 24 to January 14 mobile recruitment teams of California Department of Employment and United States Employment Service have placed 1,811 farm workers. The week Jan. 3-9 Department of Employment referred 1,308 workers to jobs replacing foreign workers in addition to mobile team recruitment efforts. Their wage offers and other job conditions have substantially increased flow of workers into Department of Employment offices for farm jobs.

"Competition among growers for labor has been effective in recruiting and retaining workers. Increase in adverse effect rate stipulated for April 1, 1965, will further stimulate supply of labor in my judgment. I am hopeful we will be able to continue to meet our farm labor needs from supply of domestic workers."

Although plane loads of corporate farm representatives had flocked to the Capitol to try to pack the hearing which opened Friday, U. S. Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz told the Committee that the growers' claims of a farm labor shortage and of discriminatory wage standards simply do not square with the facts.

Declaring that "this whole proceeding is, in a very real sense, unreal," Wirtz pointed out that the problem "is stooped wages as well as stooped labor" and warned the Committee that to follow the growers' advice would result in wages less than enough to attract domestic workers.

He also substantiated the assertion made earlier last week by state AFL-CIO leader Pitts that the Department's wage standards were favorable instead of unfavorable to California's corporate farm interests. He pointed out that the differential in the prevailing rate is less in California than in any other state.

Under the bracero program, he explained, the piece rate for lettuce had been one cent a head. Increasing wages from \$1.33 to \$1.40 amounts to a four percent hike in labor costs and should amount to no more than 1-25th of a cent increase in the retail cost of lettuce. This corroborated Pitts statement earlier last week to the effect that the housewife need not fear any significant increase in food prices even if hired farm labor wages were doubled.

FED'S VIEW BACKED

In refuting the growers' claim that the standards would force them to move out of state, which Pitts had also challenged earlier, Wirtz noted that, although lettuce plantings last year totaled only 40,000 acres, this year, with the braceros gone, they totaled 46,000 acres. In view of this, he asked, where is the problem of moving out of state?

Agribusiness testimony before the committee tried to frighten consumers into believing that the nation must have braceros or pay exorbitant prices for food. Their testimony was shattered when Wirtz pointed out that the price of lettuce a year ago in California was \$4.25 per carton but that this year, despite the absence of braceros, the price is only \$1.90 per carton.

The Labor Secretary emphasized that the worst disservice he could perform for the growers or anybody else was to give them any reason to believe that any other course of action is in prospect than the policies already spelled out.

"The Secretary cannot presume to extend a law that the Congress clearly killed," he declared.

And at another point he added that with 3.8 million jobless in the nation, "I do not have the authority to admit 414ers under the present finding of the facts."

In stating the AFL-CIO position on Saturday, Simcich also noted that Wirtz had testified that if the same labor market forces had been allowed to operate in California's agricultural economy as had been at work in the state's manufacturing industry since 1950, the prevailing rate of pay for farm work

Take-Home Pay For Week's Work Is Just Eight Cents

A recent Associated Press news story from Fullerton reported that a group of workers who quit after one week at a citrus growing farm showed a newsman a check stub indicating that one man had earned only eight cents for work that week.

It showed: Total wages, \$16.35; withholding tax \$2.15; board \$11.67; gloves, \$2.45; balance due: \$0.08.

in California today would be approximately \$2.60 an hour.

REACTION RECALLED

The AFL-CIO spokesman provided the Committee, chaired by Senator Allen J. Ellender (D-La.), with a running day-by-day account of the initially puzzled and subsequently outraged reaction of state and federal officials as well as the daily press to the corporate growers' vain efforts to discredit domestic workers and subvert the federal-state farm labor recruitment drive.

He cited the growers' sudden cancellation of job orders after the workers were already dispatched to the farms and the repeated instances where workers, who had been assured that they could go to work immediately as citrus pickers if they reported for work at 4:00 a.m., went without food for 12 hours and then were told to come back the next day.

On New Year's Eve for example, he said, "Employment Director Albert Tieburg received a telegram from the Imperial Valley Farmers Association canceling their three-day old order for 1800 domestic agricultural workers, many of whom were already enroute or on hand for these jobs."

As a result, Simcich said, federal-state recruiting team captain Robert Chapman declared:

"I am surprised and chagrined at the reluctance of growers to cooperate wholeheartedly in this recruitment drive for workers whom growers themselves say they urgently need."

CHARGE REFUTED

As an example of the corporate growers' flagrant disregard of the truth, Simcich cited the charge made by the Imperial Valley Farmers Association that the new workers were creating welfare problems and that the crime rate in Brawley had risen 50 percent from last year. He told the committee that Mrs. Angie Saldana of the Brawley Police Records Department was quoted in the Los Angeles Times as saying that the crime rate for that time was "about the same as it was this time last year."

He also called attention to repeated instances in which two and three times as many workers showed up as were

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Action Bars Plum For Standard Oil

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Company, the low bidder which, unlike Standard, accepted last year's industry-wide 4½ per cent wage-benefit pattern.

The Contra Costa County Central Labor Council acted quickly in what was one more example of growing support for the "don't buy Standard" appeal of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers and the International Union of Petroleum Workers.

The local daily newspaper had reported that "although final action on awarding a gasoline contract was put over one week . . . tentative agreement on Standard Oil was reached."

The paper said several councilmen indicated that, although Shell was low in countywide bidding, "Standard should get the nod since it is the city's highest taxpayer and a local industry."

The Central Labor Council voted unanimously to oppose a city contract for Standard and instructed its secretary, Hugh Caudel, to take labor's views to the next meeting of the city council.

In a public statement, Caudel noted that Standard was not the low bidder and, more important, he said:

"Standard insists that its employees, including many Richmond citizens, accept a lesser union contract proposal than all of Standard's major competitors have granted to their employees."

To make sure that all the issues were aired, scores of members of OCAW, IUPW and other unions passed out handbills to the public in front of city hall the day of the meeting. The message reached a much wider audience when a major television station telecast the handbill passers in its evening news program.

When the issue came to the city council floor, two Councilmen, one a current and the other a retired Standard Oil employee, announced they would not vote on the issue.

Caudel pointed out that Standard is holding tough on its 3½ per cent contract proposal, while the rest of the industry has signed the 4½ per cent agreement. Not only is Standard's proposal smaller than that which its competitors have accepted but it ignores fringe improvements including the highly important added week of vacation which labor won from the other companies as a measure of automation job protection, he explained.

Union's 150th Birthday

Columbia Typographical Union No. 101, the nation's oldest labor union, celebrated its 150th anniversary. The union was organized on January 7, 1815 by printers "for the mutual benefit of each, binding ourselves one to the other." It had 28 members then and has 4100 now.

State Senate Fills All Committee Posts; Disability Insurance Bill Hearing Jan. 26

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Thos. L. Pitts said this week that the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, presently plans to support the Governor's bill unchanged as a stop-gap measure while making it clear that a number of substantive improvements will be sought in the program later in the session.

The Fund was obliged to borrow \$1 million from a contingency fund this week and is expected to have to borrow a total of \$34 million to pay benefits through April, State Employment Director Albert Tieburg reported this week.

The hearing on the Governor's bill will be held in Room 4202 of the Capitol.

SENATE CHANGES

In the Upper House, Senator Hugh M. Burns (D-Fresno), Senate President Pro Tem, announced appointment of the Senate's standing committees. Among the key changes reflected by these appointments are:

- Senator J. Eugene McAteer (D-San Francisco) replaced Senator Donald L. Grunsky (R-Santa Cruz) as chairman of the Revenue and Taxation Committee.

- Senator Grunsky, while retaining a seat on the Revenue and Taxation Committee, replaced Edwin J. Regan as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

- Senator John W. Holmdahl becomes Chairman of the Senate Labor Committee replacing McAteer, who retains a seat on the committee.

- Senator Robert D. Williams (D-Hanford) takes over as Chairman of the Social Welfare Committee in lieu of Senator Vernon L. Sturgeon, (R-San Luis Obispo).

- Senator Sturgeon, in addition to being named to the new 13-member Reapportionment Committee, also won a seat on the five-member Upper House Rules Committee which appoints committee members and decides what bills each committee will hear.

ASSEMBLY UNIT NAMED

In the Assembly, the only additional committee named since announcement of the Rules Committee last week is the Ways and Means Committee, the composition of which was announced Tuesday. Reappointed for his third term as chairman was Robert W. Crown (D-Alameda). Other Democrats on the 21-member committee, which consists of 13 Democrats and 8 Republicans, are:

Jerome R. Waldie of Antioch; John C. Williamson of Bakersfield; Gordon H. Winton of Merced; Pauline Davis of Portola; Nicholas C. Petris of Oakland; James R. Mills of San Diego; Joseph M. Kennick of Long Beach; Carley V. Porter of Compton; Burt Henson of Ventura; Leroy F. Greene of Sacramento; Charles W. Meyers of San Francisco;

and Anthony C. Beilenson of Beverly Hills.

Republicans are: Frank P. Belotti of Eureka; Carl A. Britschgi of Redwood City; Don Mulford of Oakland; Charles J. Conrad of Sherman Oaks; Howard J. Thelin of Glendale; Frank Lanterman of La Canada; John L. E. Collier of South Pasadena; and Hale Ashcraft of La Jolla.

The new members of the Committee are Democrats Meyers, Henson, Greene and Beilenson and Republicans Ashcraft and Minority Caucus Chairman Mulford. During the 1963 session the committee was composed of 20 members of which 13 were Democrats and 7 Republicans.

As of mid-week some 446 bills had been introduced in the Assembly and 220 in the Senate. As soon as these bills are available in sufficient sequence, The Newsletter will begin to publish a digest and evaluation of measures of primary concern to the Federation.

New Rules To Aid State Consumers

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and required to pay much more than it had anticipated to move, but was also stuck for the storage charges for the time it took them to raise the additional funds.

Although complete conformity with the Agricultural Department's new rules requiring the quantity to be stated on the main display panel of packages will not be required until mid-summer of 1966, shoppers can look forward to some improvement in the clarity of package labels as the year rolls along.

Mrs. Helen E. Nelson, the State's Consumer Counsel, represented the consumers' interest at hearings held on both the household moving and packaging regulations. She pointed out that "the family's rights as consumers" as well as "the family's dollars were at stake in these cases."

Last year when credit life insurance interests sought a boost in the premium charged to insure a borrower's life, Mrs. Nelson opposed the increase in the consumer's behalf. Although a boost was granted, it was less than the amount requested and the difference has already resulted in substantial savings to consumers, she reported.

During the 1963 legislative session, the Consumer Counsel's office played a major roll in winning passage of a measure to curb racketeering in TV and radio repairs by creating a state Bureau of Electronic Repair Dealer Registration.

Currently, her office is cooperating in a legislative study of auto repair practices.



CAPITOL CONFERENCE — Tom Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, (center) discusses outlook for labor's legislative program with AFL-CIO President George Meany at a luncheon for the California Congressional delegation in Washington as Rep. Cecil King (D. - Los Angeles) co-author of the Medicare bill,

looks on. The luncheon, sponsored by the State Federation last week in conjunction with the national AFL-CIO Legislative Conference, was held in the Capitol itself. Legislative goals receiving special emphasis included repeal of Section 14-b of the Taft-Hartley Act, passage of Medicare, and permanent termination of the bracero program.

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jobs available. For example, on January 5 the Department of Employment announced that only 1365 of the 3391 job applicants on file with the recruiting teams had been placed and that in the case of Bakersfield only 176 out of 716 had actually been referred to a job.

On the same day the State Department of Employment Director Albert Tieburg echoed his outrage at the behavior of the Imperial Valley Farmers Association when he declared:

"It is astounding that growers will cry labor shortage and cancel their order for workers when two bus loads of qualified farm workers especially recruited for them were on the road to them. But that is what the Imperial Valley Farmers Association did."

A day earlier the AFL-CIO statement said, "One of the most prominent lettuce, carrot and celery growers on the West Coast . . . complained that the Farm Placement Service was sending too many unemployed domestics to the Imperial Valley and that these were

being supplemented by many others who were flooding the area on their own.

"This establishes that fact that the official federal-state figures concerning the number of applicants available for farm work significantly understate the actual volume of domestics . . . actively seeking such employment."

In summing up, the AFL-CIO statement reiterated organized labor's strenuous opposition to any use of Public Law 414 as a substitute for the bracero program on moral, economic and legal grounds and declared:

"If we are to genuinely begin to cope with this nation's poverty and civil rights problems, there is no more promising opportunity anywhere on the horizon than the one afforded us by Congress' action to bring to a screeching halt the vicious consequences that have been fostered by Public Law 78 . . . We feel confident that the Senate Agriculture Committee will agree that a minimal step in the direction of complying with this nation's pressing needs calls for a firm stand against any weakening of the Secretary's regulations."

\$4 Million in Back Wages Regained

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funds and, as a result, the funds acquired \$645,519.

In other areas of its work, the Division handled 5,621 controversies and 602 complaints involving employment agencies and 252 involving farm labor contractors. In general, the Division uses the term "controversies" to apply to cases involving disputes over fees and the term "complaints" to apply to cases involving other aspects of labor law enforcement not involving fees.

In the field of workmen's compensation law enforcement, 2,709 complaints were handled.

The Division also found 452 cases involving child labor law violations and issued 3,456 theatrical payments to minors under 18 employed in the entertainment field.

Other types of cases handled during the year included improper advertising for employees during labor disputes, violation of the bond laws, misrepresentation in employment, and violation of the Public Works and Day of Rest laws.