

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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SAN FRANCISCO
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CFD1069
April 28, 1954

AFL UNEMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE OPENS AT FAST PACE IN SANTA BARBARA

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--California's current unemployment trend and the AFL political program for the state featured opening day discussions at the California State Federation of Labor's Unemployment Conference held this week in Santa Barbara.

Kickoff address at the Monday morning session was delivered by William A. Burkett, director of the State Department of Employment.

Burkett predicted that average unemployment in California during the first half of 1954 will total about 5.6 percent of the labor force, and for the full year, a little more than 5 percent.

He added that both figures are well under the percentages for all postwar years prior to the outbreak of the Korean conflict. At present, 6 percent of the state's workers are jobless.

In his review of California's employment future, Burkett committed his agency to do "everything possible" to prevent the importation of foreign workers into California.

He pledged full support to the AFL's position in the running fight to block creation of a cheap labor pool through recruitment of Mexican and British West Indian farm workers.

Other first day speakers included Max Kossoris, regional director, U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; George S. Roche, chief, Research and Statistics Section, State Department of Employment; and C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer, California State Federation of Labor.

Haggerty analyzed the AFL political action program in California before a packed evening session.

Speaking pointedly, he surveyed the legislative picture for

the 1955 session in terms of actual friends labor can count upon in test issues.

The week-long conference opened formally Sunday night, April 25, at the Samarkand Hotel.

Delegates were welcomed by Haggerty, who was followed by Frederick A. Breier, assistant professor of Economics at the University of San Francisco. Breier outlined the national economic scene in terms of production and finance.

The week-long attendance mark was due to go above 150 at mid-week as the conference schedule called for two days of study of the state unemployment insurance law.

Political action was also billed for continued importance at evening sessions, with C. Al Green, western states director of Labor's League for Political Education, and James Hicks, Mayor of Sacramento heading the speakers' list.

State Federation President Thomas L. Pitts was due to preside at the graduation ceremonies scheduled for Friday evening, April 30.

Sponsored jointly by the California State Federation of Labor and the University of California, the Unemployment Conference is the 7th in a series of annual institutes offered by the state AFL.

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STATE FEDERATION SETS WORKMEN'S
COMPENSATION CONFERENCE FOR JUNE 5-6

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--The state AFL's second quarterly week-end education conference for 1954 will be held Saturday and Sunday, June 5-6, in Los Angeles, it was announced this week at headquarters in San Francisco.

Subject of the Los Angeles conference will be the permanent disability rating schedule which is part of the state workmen's compensation law. Official announcements will be mailed all affiliates next week.

The first quarterly week-end education conference for 1954 was held in San Francisco February 13-14.

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UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUES
ON STATE-FEDERAL LEVELS

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--Paralleling developments on the national scene, unemployment in California took another turn for the worse, jumping an additional 6,000 between February and March.

Latest official reports of the State Departments of Employment and Industrial Relations for March now put the total number of jobless at 305,000, or 6 percent of the state's civilian labor force.

Bureau of Census figures, issued earlier this month, placed the U. S. jobless total for March at 3,725,000 or 5.8 percent of the labor force.

During the past five months, unemployment in California has increased from 121,000 in October of last year to 305,000 in March -- a rise of 152 percent.

The increase in unemployment in March for both the nation and California was marked by the failure of factory employment to pick up as expected.

California manufacturing employment showed virtually no change between February and March, but was down by 14,000 from a year ago.

On the national level, factory employment dropped 161,000 between February and March, and was 1,262,000 below the March, 1953 level.

A more optimistic view of the California situation was given this week by William A. Burkett, director of the State Department of Employment.

Burkett revealed that preliminary reports for mid-April show total unemployment at 285,000, a drop of 17,000 from the March figure.

The 285,000 figure would be 90,000 above the total for April, 1953.

The Burkett estimate is unofficial, since state figures for April have not yet been released.

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AFL GRAIN MILLERS
WIN GENERAL MILLS STRIKE

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--AFL grain millers this week announced a complete victory over General Mills Inc. in their three-week strike against the giant flour corporation.

The American Federation of Grain Millers, AFL, declared the company had agreed to union requests for joint settlement of shift changes.

Sole dispute involved in the strike was the company demand to shift work schedules without union consent.

At the request of the Solano County Central Labor Council, the General Mills organization had been placed on the "We Don't Patronize" list of the California State Federation of Labor.

The Vallejo local of the AFL grain millers is affiliated with the Solano Central Council. California plants affected by the three-week strike were those in Vallejo, Los Angeles, Lodi, and Marysville.

Removal of General Mills from the state AFL "We Don't Patronize" list was requested by the Solano Council following the end of the strike.

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RELIGIOUS WEEKLY RAPS STRIKE POLLS

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--The AFL Weekly News-Reporter revealed this week that "America," national Catholic weekly review, has rapped Eisenhower proposals to require pre-strike votes under the Taft Hartley law. The Catholic weekly placed itself "clearly on record" against government supervised strike votes as proposed by the President and approved by the House Labor Committee.

Citing wartime experience with the Smith-Connally Act, the "America" editorial said the assumption that strikes lack rank and file support is "largely baseless." The magazine claimed strike polls would be "a waste of the taxpayers' money."

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MITCHELL STARTS SURVEY
OF LABOR DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell has appointed a five-man team which will help him make a complete re-evaluation of the Labor Department's activities, organization, and effectiveness.

This is the first such survey in the Department's 41-year history.

The group held its first meeting April 16. Members of the team are: J. Douglas Brown, dean, Princeton University; Cyrus S. Ching, Washington industrial relations consultant; Eli Ginzberg, professor at Columbia University; Clark Kerr, chancellor, University of California; and William T. Stead, former vice president of the Federal Reserve Board, St. Louis, Mo.

Secretary Mitchell said he and his consultants would seek to (1) clarify the objectives of every program of the department, and (2) improve the operation and coordination of department activities.

"I have approached my task with an open mind," the Secretary said. "For some years I have been familiar with the work of the department. I do not think that everything the department has done during that period is right. Neither was everything that has been done wrong.

"In the belief that reconsideration of past policies is essential to progress, I am carefully reviewing all the programs and operations of the department and making changes where changes are needed. Nothing that has been done in the past will be considered sacrosanct, nor will anything that has previously been done be discontinued without fair consideration.

"We shall change the methods of doing some things, and have already taken steps to improve our administrative machinery. We shall change the emphasis and direction of some of our programs, and have already considered some changes which will have this result."

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