WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

402 FLOOD BUILDING — 151 — SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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VICIOUS, FOUL BLOW STRUCK AT REAPPORTIONMENT CAMPAIGN

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--It was neither coincidence nor haphazard circumstances, but a combination of corporate interest, influence, lobbyist fenagling, official crass cynicism and abject subservience that placed the measure to reapportion the State Senate as Proposition No. 13 on the November ballot.

In spite of the fact that the petition to place the reapportionment measure on the ballot was the second to qualify, and contrary to repeated assurances by the Secretary of State Frank M. Jordan that it would be given the consideration due it as one of the first to qualify, reapportionment was given the burial hole of No. 13.

It is evident from this malicious conniving that the opponents of reapportionment have been driven by fear to resort to this kind of foul play in their desperate efforts to defeat equal representation in our state government.

While the Elections Code gives the Secretary of State discretion in assigning numbers to measures on the ballot, this provision is premised upon the understanding that this discretion will be exercised reasonably, judiciously and fairly. In the past, in keeping with the intent of this provision, measures affecting labor, which represents the largest section of our population, have been placed in the low-number category.

This sudden and shocking departure from practice is the culmination of a series of cloakroom maneuvers that will be fully exposed before the campaign is ended.

To the indignant protests against this kind of trickery registered by C. J. Haggerty, Secretary of the California State Federation of Labor, the office of the Secretary of State had the unbelievable gall to say that the measure to repeal the Full Crew Law was a "labor measure" and had been given the number 3 spot on the ballot. This measure seeks to eliminate the employment of adequate personnel on our trains and has been defeated consistently by the state legislature for a number of years.

That malevolent juggling was used in placing the various measures on the ballot is further verified by the fact that practically all selfish proposals and those for the benefit of the minority groups of this state -- which qualified the very last -- drew positions among the first ten on the ballot. Such positions are considered to be favorable, since most people vote on the first ten proposals and a "yes" vote is usually predominant.

Not only was reapportionment placed after the first ten propositions, but it was given number 13. Such transparent swindling was aimed to exploit the popular superstition about No. 13 and can only be matched by the perverse and infantile humor of those responsible.

The complacent smugness of the opponents of reapportionment, through their use of unlucky "13," may prove to be short-lived. The fight for equal representation in our government cannot and will not be defeated by such tactics. Thirteen can well prove unlucky for the very people who have been responsible for the assignment of this number to the reapportionment proposition. In other words, it can be unlucky for bossism and minority rule in California.

It might be well to remember that the nucleus which gave birth to this great nation consisted of 13 colonies. What is more, the amendment to our Constitution which established equality in political franchise was the 13th Amendment. Thus, No. 13 has more than once been significant as a symbol in behalf of progress.

The merits of reapportionment of the State Senate and the arguments already advanced in its behalf are too cogent, persuasive and compelling to be defeated by any superficial resort to cloakroom strategy. Reapportionment is a social issue of vital importance to the people of this state, who are determined to end minority rule. In the course of the campaign this will be brought out with such force and clearness as to banish completely the shyster combinations seeking to confuse.

Persistent rumors have reached the proponents of reapportionment that such a move was being planned to place the reapportionment measure in the most disadvantageous position on the ballot. That is why Secretary Haggerty checked with the Secretary of State and received assurance that no such plan was being considered by him. Facts, however, have proved disillusioning about these assurances, and the last word in this gerrymandering has probably not been said.

The Federation will redouble its efforts in behalf of reapportionment and accepts the challenge, fully mindful of the so-called handicap of unlucky 13, which may prove very lucky for Senate reapportionment.

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SUPREME COURT DECISION ON POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS SECTION OF TAFT-HARTLEY ACT ANALYZED

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--Following up the article in last week's News Letter, in which the Supreme Court decision in regard to the political contributions section of the Taft-Hartley Act was discussed, the text of the decision reveals that the majority of the Court, seeking to avoid declaring the whole provision of the Act to be unconstitutional, indulged in an extremely strained interpretation of the section in order to provide that the acts alleged to have been committed by Mr. Murray did not fall within the prohibition of the law.

The Court reasoned, apparently, that since copies of the CIO paper that carried the political endorsement were distributed only to purchasers or members of the union, the fact that the paper was maintained exclusively by union dues and not perhaps by subscriptions did not cause the amount spent for its publication to be considered an "expenditure" by the union within the meaning of Section 304 of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Although they concurred with the determination dismissing the indictment, Justice Rutledge, with Justices Black, Douglas and Murphy joining, wrote a decision pointing out the strained interpretation of the majority of the Court and declaring that the provision itself was unconstitutional.

The most that can be said for the majority opinion is with respect to the facts assumed by it. The test no longer is whether or not the funds in question are union dues or union funds, but rather, whether or not the funds are expended with respect to a normal, customary activity of the organization, in this case, a regularly published newspaper.

The decision of the majority of the Court infers that if, instead of a regularly published newspaper, the incident involved pamphlets only, issued periodically and distributed to individuals other than purchasers or members of the union, then it would appear that such would fall within the concept of an "expenditure," but the Court did not indicate that such an act could be constitutionally prohibited.

A contrary inference can also be drawn from this decision, as stated in the last issue of the News Letter. How far the unions can go still remains unsettled. The text of the opinion does not clear up any of the points contained in Section 304 of the Act, and does not change the ambiguity surrounding what political activities unions can engage in directly, insofar as contributing to funds for campaigns to elect candidates seeking federal office. The fundamental question of the constitutionality of Section 304 is, therefore, still up in the air.

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CHILDREN USED AS STRIKEBREAKERS BY DI GIORGIO

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--At least 100 children between the ages of 12 and 16 are working behind the picket lines of the strikebound Di Giorgio ranch.

The corporation has resorted to this extreme measure in order to meet their shortage of labor. Certainly, it represents a new low in strikebreaking tactics against the AFL National Farm Labor Union, which has entered the 9th month of its present strike.

A wide appeal to all mothers and fathers in Kern County, asking them to prevent their children from being used as strikebreakers, has been made by the National Farm Labor Union. The union stated that it will do everything possible to obtain legislation that will prevent the employment of child labor in the backbreaking toil of field work.

The union also contends that the employment of children on the Di Giorgio ranch and other large ranches can be considered a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency. At Di Giorgio, the children work alongside hardbitten strikebreakers and nondescript drifters and winos.

Mr. Di Giorgio's claim to be a benefactor of mankind obviously cannot be taken seriously when he is responsible for the employment of children under these circumstances, strike or no strike.

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FOOD PRICES REACH NEW PEAKS

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The rising tide of food prices has reached an unprecedented peak in San Francisco, with the food index standing at 223.4 on May 15, 1948, according to a report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, released by Max D. Kossoris, Regional Director.

The increase from the April 1948 index of 219.5 to the May index of 223.4 amounts to 1.8 percent.

This continued rise in food prices to new high levels is true of the nation as a whole. Since August 1939, average food prices have risen 138.2 percent. The May dollar bought only as much food as could have been purchased with 42 cents in the prewar month of August 1939, according to B.L.S.

Los Angeles experienced a fractional drop in average retail prices, but the entire level of consumer prices in May 1948, as compared with August 1939, has risen by 68.3 percent.

Rents have generally increased throughout the country as a result of the Housing and Rent Act of 1948, which permitted landlords and tenants again to agree to rent increases up to 15 percent.

No relief is in sight, and with Congress more concerned with playing politics than in meeting these basic problems, any attempt to foresee what the future holds in store for the wage earners is pretty discouraging.

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SAN FRANCISCO BARTENDERS SPONSOR BASEBALL TEAM TO PROMOTE BETTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--Following the recommendation of the last convention of the State Federation of Labor that all unions should participate in sports activities, among others, in developing favorable public relations, San Francisco Bartenders Union Local 41 has launched a baseball team which has so far won three games and lost three, for a percentage of .500.

The team is engaged in the Summer "A" League sponsored by the City Recreation Department.

The union plans to use the present team as a nucleus to build up an organization that will participate in the Elimination Tournament of the Funston "AA" Night League.

Not only has this brought the name of the local union before the public on the diamond, but it has created good will for the men behind the bars (bartenders!).

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