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WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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SAN FRANCISCO,
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UNEMPLOYMENT RISES IN STATE

Factory employment in California declined by almost 11,000 production workers between November and December, according to the California Department of Industrial Relations. The drop in employment was due not only to the decline in seasonal employment, such as canning, food processing and lumber, but also to significant losses in furniture and iron and steel. Employment in manufacturing in December 1948 was 478,200, or 2,200 below that of December 1947.

Every branch of the durable goods industry, with the exception of shipbuilding and aircraft, either decreased or remained unchanged between November and December.

The Los Angeles County industrial area was almost unaffected by the decline in employment as gains in the food products industries offset losses in other groups. Area factory employment amounted to 244,000 production workers, or 600 above that of December 1947.

Employment in the San Francisco Bay industrial area, however, showed a decline of 900, to 109,100 in December 1948, and was almost 12,000 below the year-ago total.

The State Department of Employment reported that the number of Bay area workers receiving unemployment benefits was 6 percent higher in December than in November, and 79 percent higher than in December 1947. Despite the settlement of the maritime and waterfront disputes, the number of workers rehired was less than the number laid off in other fields in December.

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HELLER BUDGETS FOR SINGLE WOMAN AND FAMILY
ON RELIEF RISE

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The University of California's Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics has released two more of its standard budgets based on September 1948 prices.

Maintenance of a wholesome standard of living by a single working woman in San Francisco cost nearly 100 percent more last year than in 1941. The items, which in 1941 cost a single working woman \$1127.47, cost her \$2217.77 in 1948, or \$184.82 per month.

The Committee commented that "if this seems an anomalous statement to make about a budget that now costs about \$2200 a year for one person, the blame lies on soaring prices during the war and postwar years. A standard cannot be considered extravagant which includes such items as one movie a week, three lipsticks a year and dresses which cost about \$10."

The single woman considered has no dependents and lives in a boarding house. Savings are limited to the small sum of \$87.50 annually for emergency use only. The budget is neither a "mere subsistence" level nor an "optimum standard"; it merely represents a "wholesome life in accordance with the standards of the community."

Another standard budget recently prepared and released by the Heller Committee is a "bedrock" budget for a family of four on relief. This budget would have cost at least \$166.91 in San Francisco during last September. It would be sufficient to maintain health and efficiency, but no more. The \$166.91 a month figure is 12 percent higher than the Heller figure for September 1947.

The increase of 12 percent in the Heller Committee relief budget from September 1947 to 1948 is considerably sharper than the increase of 6.9 percent in the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cost of living index for the same period. Both figures apply to San Francisco.

As the Heller Committee pointed out earlier this year, prices of low grade items, such as hamburger, have risen relatively more than prices of high grade items, such as steaks, so that the increasing cost of living has borne more heavily on the poor than on the relatively well-to-do. (See News Letter for November 3, 1948, page 1.)

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STATE UNION LABOR SURVEY REVEALS INTERESTING DATA

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--Vacations with pay are now provided in a very high proportion of union contracts in California and paid sick leave plans are being written into agreements in a wide variety of industries, it was disclosed today in a report released by Paul Scharrenberg, Director of Industrial Relations. An analysis of 1,241 union agreements in effect in California in 1948 revealed that 1,106 contracts, or 89 percent of the total, granted paid vacations. The trend toward the general practice of paid vacations is shown by the fact that in 1941 only 54 percent of the contracts studied by the Department of Industrial Relations allowed the employees a vacation with pay.

Nearly 20 percent of all contracts analyzed in 1948 provided for sick leave with pay compared with only 12 percent of those surveyed in 1944. Contracts guaranteeing sick leave pay during illness were found in 36 of the 45 industry divisions for which contracts were analyzed.

Mr. Scharrenberg also announced release of the publication, "Union Labor in California, 1947," which indicated an increase of 7 percent in union membership between June 1946 and June 1947. Total employment in the State rose $3\frac{1}{2}$ percent during the same period.

Workers in the construction industry comprised the highest percentage of all union members reported, 17 percent. The next largest membership was reported by locals in the transportation and public warehousing industry, followed by those in food manufacturing.

A significant trend revealed by this report is the increasing proportion of locals having women members. In 1940, 25 percent of the reporting locals indicated that they had women on their membership roster. In 1947, the proportion had increased to 45 percent of all the reporting locals in California.

Women comprised one out of every six union members reported. The highest ratio of female to total members was in the textiles and apparel industry, in which women represented almost three-fourths of the total membership reported. The second highest ratio was in locals composed of hotel and restaurant workers, followed by those in food manufacturing.

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PRESIDENT'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM NEEDS SUPPORT

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--President Truman's national health insurance program must have the active support of all the AFL members in order to beat the American Medical Association's multi-million-dollar lobby fund.

The Committee for the Nation's Health, Inc., with offices at 602 Pennsylvania Avenue S. E., Washington 3, D. C., and 1790 Broadway, New York 19, New York, has just issued a reprint from the New York Time's Magazine Section, written by Oscar Ewing, Federal Security Administrator, which states the case clearly for national health insurance. His recommendations are very similar to those made by President William Green of the AFL, and Nelson Cruikshank, Social Security Director for the AFL, before Senate committees.

Copies of the pamphlet are available by writing to the Committee for the Nation's Health at either of the above addresses. It is extremely important that the widest possible distribution be given to this timely and enlightening article.

A great number of doctors throughout the country are opposed to the reactionary policies of the American Medical Association, and they,

as well as other people, are being mobilized by this Committee to counteract the campaign to discredit the national health insurance program that is being sponsored and supported by the federal administration.

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FEDERATION WINS UNEMPLOYMENT CASE
IN SUPERIOR COURT

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--Accumulated unemployment insurance benefits, averaging about \$486 to each of 195 lumber and sawmill workers formerly employed by the Pacific Lumber Company at Scotia, will be paid as a result of a San Francisco superior court decision just handed down by Judge W. T. Belieu of Glenn County, sitting temporarily in San Francisco.

The case, James F. Thomas v. California Stabilization Commission, involved a representative suit of Thomas on behalf of the 195 workers for unemployment insurance benefits accumulated over the two-year period during which the redwood strike existed in Northern California. The California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board denied payment to these 195 ex-employees, who had refused to go through a picket line at the Pacific Lumber Company's plant.

After the legal issues had been argued and briefed extensively, the case was tried in the Superior Court in San Francisco, with the Federation's attorney, Clarence E. Todd, representing the workers. The Court directed the Unemployment Stabilization Commission to pay the accumulated benefits, totalling nearly \$94,000, to the 195 loyal members of the AFL Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union.

Judge Belieu held that the "employment termination" notice given by Pacific Lumber Company to each of the 195 employees on January 18, 1946, was in effect a discharge notice and removed the disqualification of Section 56a of the Unemployment Insurance Act, which section prohibits benefits to be paid employees who refuse to work because of a labor dispute.

This decision, coming as it does about three years after the beginning of the strike in 1946, shows the stubbornness with which the Pacific Lumber Company and the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board fought the lawful claims of these 195 ex-employees, but it also shows the persistence of the State Federation of Labor in supporting the just claims of AFL union members.