

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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SAN FRANCISCO,
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STATEWIDE POLITICAL CONFERENCE CALLED AT FRESNO FEBRUARY 26

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--A statewide conference of delegates from the various affiliated councils for the purpose of activizing the California Labor League for Political Education on a statewide basis, has been called to meet in Fresno on February 26 at 10 a.m. in the Hotel Californian. The conference will be held in the ballroom of the hotel.

The call has been sent to the various Central Labor Councils, Building Trades Councils and to all affiliated miscellaneous councils.

Because of the many pressing problems facing labor on the political field, the importance of attending this conference cannot be stressed too strongly. Evidence that the anti-labor forces are organizing more actively than ever before is becoming clearer each day. There is no question but what they are formulating a clearly defined program of activity in the coming elections with the aim of preventing labor from attaining its legislative objectives.

Labor cannot afford to wait until this anti-labor program is unfolded and translated into action. To combat it, the forces of labor must be organized and activized in anticipation of this development.

The purpose of the conference will be to organize the statewide Labor League for Political Education. The delegates are requested to come prepared to make whatever suggestions they may have in mind to intensify the activities in their respective territories.

Each Council has been requested to send two delegates to this conference.

The Executive Council of the California State Federation of Labor will meet subsequent to the statewide conference and take

whatever action it will consider advisable and appropriate.

On March 7 the state legislature will reconvene. Already a barrage of anti-labor bills has been thrown into the legislative hopper, which presents a serious challenge to the trade union movement in California. This subject will be among the many that will be discussed by the delegates.

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REASONS WHY PERSONS ARE FILING CLAIMS
FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--A study by the California State Department of Employment, based on a sample consisting of approximately 2.5 percent of all new claims filed with the Department from October 21 through November 19, 1948, reveals certain significant factors:

A total of 1,943 claims were examined, of which 1,230, or 63 percent, were filed by men. In the previous 30 days, men had filed 65 percent of the claims. Of the claims filed, 75 percent were classified as layoffs.

More than one-third of the 1,460 persons who stated they had been laid off were out of a job for lack of sufficient business to warrant their continued employment. Percentage wise, layoffs were slightly higher than in the last period studied, men accounting for a larger part of the increase. Lack of business was the single reason given by the largest number of layoffs, and 66 percent of all cases of layoffs involved three causes -- lack of business, end of seasonal work, and completion of job. Small declines were registered in the percentage of layoffs attributed to the closing of place of employment, lack of material, replacement of worker by another person, lack of business, and abolishment of positions.

Significantly, quits represented 15 percent of all cases, compared with 19 percent in the previous period. Also, the relative number of women quitting jobs was considerably lower than was shown

in the last report. There was a decrease in the proportion of persons quitting for the following reasons: insufficient wages, dissatisfaction, seeking other work, and leaving the area.

Discharges constituted 5.1 percent of all cases in the sample, compared with 3.5 percent in the preceding period. Discharges of women accounted for the larger part of the increase.

The proportion of claims filed as a result of labor disputes dropped from 7.3 percent in October to 1.4 percent in the November period. Partial claims filed because of reduced earnings increased from 1.6 percent to 3.4 percent in the same period, with those filed by women rising from 2.9 percent to 6.2 percent.

Almost 25 percent of the persons out of work had skilled occupations. Another 38 percent had unskilled, clerical or sales occupations. In the professional and managerial occupations, the proportion of layoffs and discharges increased, whereas that of quits declined from the previous month.

The percentage of claims in the clerical and sales category, when compared with the previous month, evidenced increases in those filed after layoff or discharge, and a significant decrease in those filed because of quits. Men filed 70 percent of all claims in this occupational group resulting from layoffs, and 18 percent were quits.

In the service occupations, the proportion of layoffs decreased and that of discharges increased. A larger percentage of men were laid off than women.

In the skilled occupations, there was an increase in the percentage of layoffs and quits, a small decrease in discharges, but a very significant drop in the percentage of claims filed as a result of labor disputes.

In the semi-skilled occupations, layoffs increased from 68 percent in October to 79 percent in November. Quits dropped from 22 percent to 15 percent in the same period, while discharges rose slightly.

In the unskilled category, claims resulting from layoffs constituted 85 percent of all claims filed, compared with 64 percent in the previous month. Here again there was a significant drop in the relative number of claims filed because of labor disputes.

Persons between 30 and 39 were affected most by layoffs, while those in the 20-29 group had a higher ratio of quits and discharges.

Obviously, the study reports, although the sample is valid, it is not entirely accurate because some claimants provided only incomplete information on the form, and it was not always possible from the documents to distinguish with certainty between layoffs and discharges.

It is evident from this data that, although employment may be increasing in the aggregate, the increase in the number of unemployed claims indicates that there has been an addition to the working force. It also underlines the mixed trend that is taking place in our economy. In the service and retail fields, unemployment is becoming impressive. Close attention has been given to this development in order to anticipate developments in the immediate future.

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LOS ANGELES COST OF LIVING INDEX RISES:
SAN FRANCISCO FALLS

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumers Price Index for Los Angeles rose one percent from September 15 to December 15, 1948, to 172.7. During the same period the San Francisco index declined very slightly by 0.2 percent to 176.7. In the same period, the index for the United States as a whole dropped 1.8 percent to 171.4.

It is important to remember that, despite these drops, the cost of living today remains around 30 percent above the level of June 1946, prior to the removal of price controls. It is too soon to tell whether the declines in the last three months in San Francisco and in the United States as a whole are permanent. The index has frequently declined a couple of points for a month or so during the last two and a

half years in which the general price trend has been upward.

AFL President Green has rightly stated that any price decreases to date are too little and too late to justify shelving a fourth-round wage demand. The inflation of recent years has wiped out workers' savings; these must be replenished before wages and prices can be considered in balance.

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BUILDING TRADES WORKERS' WAGES RISE 1 PERCENT

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--Wage rates of union workers in the building trades rose one percent during the last quarter of 1948, according to a survey of 7 major crafts in 85 cities released here by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor.

Higher pay scales were reported from 40 of the cities and affected about a tenth of the organized building trades workers.

The largest gain, 4.4 percent, among the 7 crafts was reported for electricians. Increases of 25 cents in Newark and 50 cents in New York, which advanced the rate levels to \$3.00 an hour in these cities, contributed markedly to the sharp rise in the average for this craft.

The Bureau's estimate of the average pay scale of union workers, including laborers, in building construction was \$2.16 an hour on January 3, 1949.

During 1948, union rates in the building trades advanced 10 percent, 75 percent of the rise occurring during the first half of the year. Inasmuch as the majority of agreements expire in spring and early summer, such wage adjustments as may result from collective bargaining would normally diminish during the latter part of the year.

Hourly rates of union workers in the construction industry have risen 68 percent since June 1939, while the Bureau's Consumers' Price Index between this date and November 1948, advanced 75 percent. Gross weekly earnings of all workers in private building construction, both union and nonunion, rose 129 percent during the same period.

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