

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

402 FLOOD BUILDING

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SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA

June 1, 1949

NEW ATTACK LAUNCHED IN LEGISLATURE ON LABOR UNIONS

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.---Apparently abandoning their "hot cargo" and secondary boycott legislation, employer groups have shifted their concentration onto AB 1359 (Levering), which purports to restrict "featherbedding" practices. This bill, in its amended form, threatens to mar cooperative union-management relations with constant recourse to the bludgeoning anti-labor weapon of injunctions.

Levering's pet concern in introducing this proposed legislation is to reinterpret the entire basis of collective bargaining and labor relations as a unilateral process intended to grant complete priority to any and all desires and needs of employers. Under such an interpretation, any action undertaken by unions to improve conditions or the status of their members can be deemed to be coercion or compulsion. The real "joker" to be hidden away in a new section of the Labor Code would condemn almost any concerted refusals to work as unlawful acts directed against "public policy" as defined by Levering in AB 1359.

Protests by letter and telegram should immediately be directed by all union members and their friends to their assemblymen in the state capitol against this last-minute, employer-directed offensive against the integrity of collective bargaining and labor's long-established right to negotiate through unions of its own choosing, without unfair dictation from employers or government.

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OTHER LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--"Equal pay for equal work" is the aim of AB 160, which obtained a favorable recommendation on May 26 from the Senate Committee on Labor. This bill has already passed the Assembly and in its amended form guarantees women similar compensation for comparable job performance with men. There are many strings attached to the guarantee, but its passage would be an important victory for labor. The measure will need tremendous popular support, as the Senate killed a similar proposal during the 1947, 1945 and 1943 sessions.

Unemployment insurance benefits may be extended as a result of amendments recently introduced in the Federation-sponsored AB 806. This bill now provides that while individuals working for political subdivisions will remain outside of the benefit provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, individuals working for foundations, corporations or funds devoted to various charitable, cultural, religious, or scientific purposes will become eligible for payments. This bill is set for hearing on June 6 before the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee.

The same day, this committee will also hear the following two bills to liberalize the unemployment and disability insurance act: AB 175, to increase unemployment benefits, and AB 181, to increase disability insurance benefits.

In addition, the following bad unemployment insurance bills are set for hearing:

AB 788, providing that payments for vacation or dismissal may be deducted from unemployment insurance benefits.

AB 828, which prohibits benefits to the self-employed or those in employment not covered by the Act.

SB 313, permitting smaller contributions under merit rating.

SB 375 and SB 378, restricting the type of claimant eligible for benefits.

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SB 379, requiring the Department to reveal a claimant's previous employers and the claimant's address.

AB 1877, dealing with transfer payments to the Unemployment Disability Insurance Fund.

Commercial fishing restrictions, which would have banned the use of nets in San Francisco Bay and other northern California areas, were opposed by Federation representatives before the Assembly Fish and Game Committee on May 24. This endeavor by sportsmen to force through AB 2015, despite the repudiation of Proposition No. 6, along similar lines, in the November 1948 elections, was blocked. Assemblyman Robert Condon, Contra Costa, ably assisted the Federation in breaking down the specious arguments put forth by the proponents of the measure. An attempt may be made toward the close of this session to appoint an interim committee to investigate the commercial fishing question.

Wilbur J. Bassett, Secretary of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council, was confirmed as a member of the State Social Welfare Board on May 25 by a 26-6 vote in the Senate. The Rules Committee had previously unanimously favored the approval of this well-deserved appointment over the belligerent opposition of such anti-labor figures as Senators Tenney (Los Angeles), Kraft (San Diego), Sutton (Maxwell), Watson (Orange), Burns (Fresno) and Dilworth (Hemet). Outstanding members of the Rules Committee headed by Salsman (Palo Alto) and supported by Hatfield (Newman) exposed the selfish and biased objections of a small minority who, through personal invective, sought to abuse the reputation and ability of an outstanding labor leader who has always enjoyed great respect among all union members.

Compulsory health insurance, as proposed in Federation bill AB 863, will be heard June 14 at 8 p.m. before the Assembly Public Health Committee. If "Butch" Powers (Eagleville) recovers from recently suffered injuries within the next few weeks, a further effort will be made in the Senate by Senator Salsman to withdraw the less

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thorough-going SB 157 proposal for health insurance from the Senate Committee on Governmental Efficiency.

Oleomargarine legislation, permitting the sale and manufacture of colored oleo, is scheduled for consideration in the Senate Agricultural Committee on Tuesday, June 7, at 8 p.m. The measure, AB 30, by Assemblymen Maloney and Gaffney, has already passed the Assembly.

Workmen's compensation improvements were hit in the Senate Committee on Labor on May 26 when the Committee killed AB 191, which would have increased the pay for medical directors and assistants. The three good votes were O'Gara, Dillinger and Johnson.

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AFL PRESIDENT WILLIAM GREEN WILL SPEAK
IN BERKELEY JUNE 9

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor will speak at the invitation of the Institute of Industrial Relations of the University of California on June 9, at Wheeler Hall, 8 p.m., in Berkeley. His topic will be "The Economics of Collective Bargaining," which is the subject of a series of lectures which has been sponsored by the Institute of Industrial Relations during the past year.

Other speakers on the program have been U. S. Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin; Edwin Nourse, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, Wallace F. Bennett, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, Walter Reuther, President of the United Automobile Workers, CIO, and Wayne Morse, U. S. Senator from Oregon. Professor Sumner H. Slichter of Harvard University also spoke on the program at the University of California in Los Angeles, but did not appear at Berkeley.

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NEW UNEMPLOYMENT DECLINES

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--New unemployment throughout the United States declined among workers covered by state unemployment insurance systems during the week ending May 14, according to reports compiled by the U. S. Federal Security Agency. Initial claims declined from 354,300 to 344,400 with 28 states participating in the decrease. Secondary unemployment caused by the Ford labor dispute prevented a further decline in total initial claims, but with the settlement of this dispute, pending arbitration, a further decline in unemployment should occur.

This news seems to confirm the opinion held by government and other analysts that the past period of unemployment and falling prices was an adjustment of supply and demand resulting from wartime conditions, rather than the beginning of a major depression.

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Other factors also indicate that the American economy is in a relatively strong position. The decline in prices, at least at the consumer level, has halted temporarily, and as reported in the Weekly News Letter for May 25, 1949, p. 2, the BLS consumer price index rose slightly in March and April. In addition, corporate profits for 1948 and for the first quarter of 1949 are at a high level (Weekly News Letter, May 18, 1949, p. 4) according to incomplete reports of the National City Bank. These reports were confirmed by the U. S. Federal Trade Commission and Securities and Exchange Commission's final and comprehensive report for 1948, which shows net profits after taxes at 13.9 percent above 1947 levels for all manufacturing corporations.

Our present system of social security benefits and farm supports has also cushioned the readjustment and has prevented violent repercussions which would otherwise have occurred from unemployment. Marked increases in productivity in the past year have been reported in scattered and incomplete form from several sources, while further and still greater increases can confidently be expected during the coming year, so that declining production costs should make it possible for industry to absorb price cuts and still afford wage increases.

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SUPPORT OF CARE PROGRAM URGED

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The American Federation of Labor, the California State Federation of Labor, many local unions and individual members of organized labor throughout the state have given their support to the CARE program for sending food packages abroad. If this program of aid is to continue, year-round support is necessary. All members are asked to send their contributions to CARE-AFL Representative, 50 Broad Street, New York 4, New York.

In the event that members of local unions do not know a specific beneficiary, the AFL Labor League for Human Rights or the CARE AFL Representative will supply names of authenticated needy trade unionists, or you may simply designate that your contribution is to go to a member of such a group.

It is essential that trade unionists in this country show their interest and sympathy in a very direct and personal way in the trade union movement and in the welfare of the people of Europe, so that European democracy may be invigorated and strengthened, and so that a free people abroad can resume their rightful place in the forefront of civilization and can contribute once more to the security and welfare of the world.

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LABOR MUST SHOW ITS STRENGTH IN 1950.

LET'S BE PREPARED.

SEND IN YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS NOW TO THE CALIFORNIA

LABOR LEAGUE FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION.

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