

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA



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LABOR DAY MESSAGE

by
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Secretary, California State Federation of Labor

The importance of this Labor Day of 1949 is an historic reminder that in the course of our struggle for better living in America, organized workingmen have never known rest, have never known a Labor Day on which they could relax and consider their job safely and fully done.

Labor Day has served always as a day of inspiration, as a day of challenge to our energies and courage, and surely that is true on this first Monday of September, 1949, when the working people of the nation stand aroused to the dangers and perils about them.

We have come far from the frail but valiant beginnings of the labor movement in this country. We have come far from the desperate times of the past when our brothers and sisters were hounded and exploited in the mills and factories of an expanding America. But we have not come far enough.

Despite our maturity and increased prestige, labor is still viewed as a mere commodity by the reactionary forces of our national life. Despite our numbers, we are tolerated, rather than recognized.

The position of the workingman has not yet reached that high station to which his inherent dignity entitles him. He is still all too dependent upon the giant commercial and industrial machines of our economy. Surely, this dependency is sadly evident today as rising unemployment casts a fearful shadow over millions of American homes.

The worker still lacks social security in any significant sense. And what is more, he is the daily object of attacks that would destroy whatever economic advance he has achieved through organized action.

These attacks are chiefly perpetrated in our Congress and in our state legislatures. They are directed by men who would impose their special tyranny upon the American public, the tyranny of business monopoly and business domination.

The American Federation of Labor has vowed to resist this imposition. It is determined to carry the cause of labor to both Congress and the state legislatures. And to this end, it has founded Labor's League for Political Education, a movement which may well become a dynamic element in the national political structure.

Labor has turned to intense political action because it watched with dismay and shock the iron control visited upon our lives by the plundering powers of the 80th Congress. Labor has always recognized the necessity for political interest and action, but the 80th Congress made it dramatically clear to every unionist in America that organized workers would either enter politics on a full national scale or perish before the onslaughts of big business.

The American Federation of Labor shall conduct its political campaign on the same sure basis that it built its economic strength.

It will continue to place America first in all its thinking. It will continue to resist and oppose on every occasion the presence of Communist despotism within and without the labor movement. It will continue to defend the right of private property and the right of private business, but as always, it will assert that the survival of these rights is dependent upon their serving the common good of all people.

We cannot, we must not rest. The major battles for sufficient social benefits have not yet been won, and the American Federation of

Labor will face the political and economic future mindful that the destiny of the working people is worthy of something more than good wages and hours, that it is deserving also of a full life of social protection and security.

Let Labor Day, then, remind us that our greatest struggles and our greatest victories are yet before us. The future awaits our vigor, the vigor of men and women united in the high cause of organized labor. We have just begun to live.

CALIFORNIA WELCOMES THE ITU

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The 91st convention of the International Typographical Union held this past week in Oakland marked the assemblage of a militant AFL trade union which has played a leading role in the national fight against the Taft-Hartley law.

Some 350 delegates, representing the union's 93,370 members, and 2,000 visitors were present when the convention opened Saturday morning, August 13, in the Oakland Civic Auditorium.

This annual meeting of one of America's oldest trade unions was the first international labor convention ever held within the territory of the Oakland or Alameda County labor movement.

THE INSURANCE LOBBY -- VI

(Editor's Note: This is the sixth in a series of articles treating the activities of the insurance lobby at Sacramento. This week's article concludes the series and points to the necessity for reconsideration of social insurance policies in California.)

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--This Weekly News Letter series has reviewed the endeavors of the insurance lobby at the recent '49er session of the California legislature to frustrate the liberal practice of the unemployment insurance function, the disability insurance function, and the workmen's compensation function.

All of these threats to genuine worker security demanded and received the opposition of the California State Federation of Labor.

All of these threats betrayed the apparently inherent avarice of a lobby determined to place profit rights above human rights.

And while all of these threats deserve full condemnation, it is obvious that the disability intrigue merits particular attention.

The disability insurance plan is financed solely by the workers of the state, who contribute one percent of their wages either to the state fund or to a private insurance unit with which they have associated themselves.

Thus, they may accept the benefits and coverage of the state disability insurance plan, which is operated by the State of California, or they may agree to be covered by a voluntary plan, presented and administered by a private insurance company.

The private plan must be superior to the state plan in at least one respect.

And since any liberalizing of the disability law will thereby reduce insurance company profits under the voluntary system, the labor movement was savagely fought whenever it sought to increase worker benefits at the '49er session.

The hospitalization right, which now enables an unemployed worker to receive \$8.00 a day for 12 hospital days, was won over the intense and belligerent opposition of the insurance lobby.

All other attempts at liberalizing this plan failed because of insurance lobby influence.

California workers must therefore consider this choice. They must either accept the validity of the voluntary plan and so allow insurance greed to prevent any further benefits, OR they must reject the voluntary plan at the local plant level as an instrument of insurance control.

They should remember that while the voluntary plan must be superior to the state fund in the immediate sense, the very existence of the plan freezes the benefits obtained and destroys the primary purpose of the law.

The disability law was written to protect workers unemployed because of non-industrial causes. It has done that in a limited way. The limitations are enforced by the insurance powers who have made millions of a plan created to aid the sick and ailing.

This intolerable situation cannot continue. The coming convention of the California State Federation of Labor will consider a boycott of all voluntary plans on the basis that such plans have merely provided the occasion for insurance abuse in the profit sphere.

There has been a confidence to the insurance lobby influence at Sacramento. But labor holds the final answer -- the economic strength of its organized members. An injury to one is still an injury to all.

WE'RE NOT APPRECIATED

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--The Commercial News, a San Francisco business sheet, doesn't appreciate the Weekly News Letter series on the insurance lobby activities at Sacramento.

It claims "the attack indicates a very definite effort to put the insurance business in a bad light..."

However, the punch line comes in a description of the disability insurance plan when, and we quote: "SO-CALLED workers under the plan who have one percent deducted, ..." etc.

An approximate 17,000 workers were killed in American industry last year. SO-CALLED workers, if you read the Commercial News.

PRESIDENT GREEN TO ADDRESS SAN DIEGO LABOR DAY RALLY

(CFLNL)SAN FRANCISCO.--San Diego's largest Labor Day celebration in history will be featured by the presence of William Green, AFL president, and other noted leaders of the labor movement.

President Green's San Diego speech will be broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company.

Other program speakers will include Governor Earl Warren, C. J. Haggerty, Secretary of the State Federation of Labor, and John F. Shelley, Federation President.

Hotel reservations may be made with Dexter Jewett, 325 E. Street, San Diego.

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