

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

FROM

CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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SAN FRANCISCO,
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AFL WEATHERS LEGISLATIVE STORM AS 1951 SESSION ADJOURNS

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--With historic victories in Workmen's Compensation and Disability Insurance firmly in hand, and with its trade union structure still intact, the California State Federation of Labor emerged embattled and still vigorous last Saturday night from the tumultuous 1951 general session of the state legislature.

A box-score review would show that labor won basic and long sought gains and at the same time successfully repelled constant reactionary assaults on its fundamental rights.

The new Workmen's Compensation law, sponsored by the state AFL, adopted by the legislature, and signed by Governor Earl Warren, provides for the following major improvements:

- (1) Boost in maximum weekly benefits from \$30 to \$35.
- (2) Increase in death benefits from \$6,000 to \$7,000 where there is only a surviving widow, and from \$7,500 to \$8,750 where there are a surviving widow and dependent children.

(3) Replacement of dentures injured or destroyed in industrial accidents; replacement of damaged eyeglasses if disability exceeds three days, rather than seven as under the old law.

(4) Compensation for laboratory fees reasonably and necessarily incurred for purpose of proving a contested claim.

The intense campaign to obtain an improved disability insurance law resulted in victory when the 1951 legislature adopted an AFL sponsored bill, since signed by the Governor, to effect the following liberal changes:

- (1) Boost in maximum weekly benefits from \$25 to \$30.

(2) Workers on strike may collect benefits if disability is from causes other than strike activities.

(3) Workers may collect benefits if their respective employers are not paying more than 70% of their regular wage during the disability period.

On the civil rights front, the AFL secured passage of a measure to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, creed, or color in the hiring of apprentices on public work projects. The bill is now before the Governor for signature.

At the request of the AFL and aroused civic bodies throughout California, Governor Warren last Friday vetoed a Big Business attempt to cripple the voting rights of working men and women.

In his message of veto to the Assembly, the Governor declared that AB 2665, introduced by Arthur H. Connolly Jr. (R. San Francisco), would gravely restrict the present rights of workers to obtain two hours off for voting purposes on election days.

The Connolly measure would have denied workers such voting time if the polls were open before and after their normal work period.

Warren noted that the present law had been on the statute books for 60 years in California and therefore questioned the new Connolly scheme to discourage widespread voting. The veto was upheld by Assembly vote last Saturday.

Presently before the Governor for study and action are the following measures that would narrow unemployment insurance eligibility and which passed both houses over strong labor protests:

(1) AB 2502, introduced by Assemblyman Richard J. Dolwig (R. South San Francisco) which would nullify wages earned prior to the filing of a valid claim and not used in the computation of the award, thus hitting the worker in the computing of any later award.

(2) AB 1715, introduced by Assemblyman Harold K. Levering

(R. Los Angeles), which would disqualify women from unemployment insurance benefits if such employees leave their jobs "to be married," or if "marital or domestic duties" require resignation from employment. Specifically, women workers thus classified would not be able to receive unemployment benefits after a return to the labor market until having earned wages of at least \$100 in employment occurring after the resignation.

Also before the Governor for action was SB 693 which would protect transit employees against delayed action damage suits. The measure was sponsored by the state AFL and introduced by Senator Gerald J. O'Gara (D. San Francisco).

Other AFL backed legislation approved by both houses included bills tightening apprenticeship training requirements, and extending child care centers under more liberal admittance standards. The latter measure passed in the closing days of the session following adoption of amendments requiring partially local financing.

Beaten back despite frantic maneuvering by the Associated Farmers were all attempts to impose secondary boycott and anti-strike legislation on California workers.

The powerful corporate farm lobby was unable to secure passage of their "hot cargo" measures in either Senate or Assembly. In retaliation, spokesmen for the Associated Farmers bitterly assailed both the AFL and Governor Warren for opposing their bills. The Governor's message to the legislature in January had requested that both labor and capital refrain from introducing provocative measures at a time when industrial peace was obviously essential to the national defense effort.

Upon the presentation of militantly anti-labor measures by the Big Business lobbies, C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL, charged that the reactionaries would light the fires of industrial warfare in California unless repudiated by the legislature.

The Assembly and Senate supported the AFL position and conclusively smashed both "hot cargo" and "open shop" legislation.

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AFL TELEGRAPHERS' UNION
TO STRIKE WESTERN UNION

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--A nationwide strike against the Western Union Telegraph Company has been voted by the Commercial Telegraphers' Union, AFL, to commence Monday, July 2, at 4:00 a.m. (P.D.T.).

James W. Cross, president of San Francisco's CTU local, reported that the national membership had voted the strike action by a ten to one majority.

Cross also revealed that Western Union employees have not received a general wage increase in three years. The CTU is asking for a minimum wage boost of 25 cents per hour for all employees. The union lists the average straight-time wage rate at approximately \$1.27 per hour.

The strike will involve more than 3,000 workers in California and some 35,000 nationally.

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AFL FARM UNION ENDS
IMPERIAL VALLEY STRIKE

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--Accompanied by a blast at the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Farm Labor Union, AFL, this Monday ended its month-old strike against the Imperial Valley Farmers' Association.

H. L. Mitchell, NFLU president, announced that strike action had been postponed until the next work season and at the same time condemned the Labor Department for allowing itself "to be used as an employment agency for strikebreakers."

Mitchell claimed that the Labor Department's failure to remove Mexican contract workers from struck farms in sufficient

time proved an effective strike-breaking device.

The strike was called May 26 against the employment of low-wage Mexican nationals. The union also asked for higher wages.

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HAGGERTY ASKS CALIFORNIA
CONGRESSMEN TO EXTEND DPA

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO.--In a communication addressed to all California congressmen, C. J. Haggerty, executive head of the state AFL, last week urged that the Defense Production Act of 1950 be extended and improved so as to protect the wage earning public in the mobilization crisis,

The present Act is scheduled to expire June 30, 1951.

Haggerty reminded that labor has long requested strong and adequate measures to halt inflation and that total cooperation in the defense effort makes it necessary that Congress fairly distribute the burden of the mobilization program.

Continuation of the Defense Production Act was advocated with the following suggestions: (1) Effective rent controls; (2) Power to roll back prices should be retained; (3) Price controls should be rigorously applied, particularly to foods; (4) Restrictions on housing credit should be revised to make credit available for lower income families.

Meanwhile the New York Times this week predicted that the future of the DPA depended upon popular interest throughout the country.

The Times observed that telegrams, letters, and cards received since President Truman's recent plea for a strong Defense Production Act were running 7 to 1 in favor of tighter controls.

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