

Cross Section AFL

(Featuring Robert J. Watt, International Representative of the AFL and member of the National Wage Stabilization Board, and Philip Pearl, National Information Director of the AFL, interviewed at Washington, D. C., by Dwight Cooke, CBS commentator, after the mine operators, who had requested this period to state their side of the coal dispute, declined to discuss publicly the issues involved.)

Washington, D. C. — Improved OPA enforcement, the coal mine shutdown and the issues involved, a long-range housing program to aid millions, an expanded social security program and the prospect for labor in foreign nations were discussed in the fifth of a series of radio programs entitled "Cross Section — AFL" when Dwight Cooke, CBS commentator, interviewed two AFL spokesmen here for the Columbia Broadcasting System over a nation-wide hookup.

Both Watt and Pearl were sharply critical of OPA on grounds that its rules and regulations are not sufficiently enforced. They called for an extension of the act, with strong tightening of its enforcement.

"We believe there is great room for improvement in the administration of OPA," Mr. Watt said. "It is my opinion that a great deal of time is being devoted by the top officials to propaganda, instead of better administration. In fact, I think the average American housewife is worse off now, in relation to the purchase of basic commodities, than during the war."

Strong endorsement of the pending Wagner-Ellender-Taft housing bill was voiced by Pearl.

"The AFL is vitally interested in this measure," he said, "which calls for a 10-year program of new home construction, homes that are very badly needed by so many millions of our people, at the rate of about a million and a half new homes a year."

"Another feature which commends this legislation very highly to the AFL is that it has an amendment calling for the prevailing rate of wages on construction that's financed by FHA-guaranteed mortgages. The bill was passed by the Senate by the overwhelming vote of 50 to 21. Now it's in the House and we hope and expect our members will write their Representatives urging support of this measure."

Watt expressed fervent hope for passage of the pending amendment expanding the Social Security Act.

"This isn't socialized medicine," he explained. "The American Federation of Labor program includes very definite proposals for the development of insurance for disability, old age, unemployment compensation and a democratic system of health insurance."

Much of the legislative program supported by the AFL, Pearl told the radio audience, has been slowed by the political activities of the CIO.

Watt, discussing AFL foreign policy, cited prewar opposition by the organization to Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, the conquest of Ethiopia, Japanese interference in China, the Munich "sell-out" and totalitarianism generally. Striking out at conditions in Russia, he said:

"I'm frankly of the opinion that free labor never has existed in Russia and does not exist there today. We realize that the U. S. Government must deal with other governments, including Russia, but the AFL insists that any free, voluntary association of trade unions should not, and we do not, deal with any organization other than those that are free, voluntary associations."

On the other hand, Watt emphasized the freedom of British trade unions. British socialism, he said, is just as free, and places just as much emphasis on decision by the democratic process, as in the United States.

Omaha, Neb.—A drastic step to eliminate black market operations in meat has been taken by Local 44 of the Meat Cutters' Union (AFL). It adopted a resolution declaring that "any union meat cutter found guilty of practicing black market activities and accepting money on the side for meat purchases shall be punished by discharge from his job and expelled from our organization."

SOCIAL SECURITY

EXPANSION IS ASKED BY A. J. ALTMAYER

Washington, D. C. — Increased Federal aid, under the social security system, to provide "adequate aid to any needy person," was urged upon the House Ways and Means Committee by Arthur J. Altmeyer, chairman of the Social Security Board.

Sharply criticizing the limitations of the present plan, under which States, localities or both carry a heavy share of the burden, he proposed Federal entry into the field of general assistance to aid "incapacitated adults other than the aged and blind, the only handicapped groups now eligible under the Social Security Act."

"The amount of assistance which the Federal Government shares equally with a State is limited to a Federal-State total of \$40 a month for a recipient of old-age assistance or aid to the blind, and \$18 for the first child and \$12 for each other child aided in a family receiving aid to dependent children," he said.

"Thus Federal funds may represent no more than \$20 a month of the payment of an aged or blind person and, for families receiving aid to dependent children, \$9 a month for one child receiving aid and \$6 additional for each other child States may, and many do, make payments in excess of the Federal matching maximums, but they must pay all the additional amount from State or local funds."

Citing the increase in pleas for assistance since the end of the war—a situation marked by increasing unemployment and lower earnings, Mr. Altmeyer told the committee:

"The number of families receiving aid to dependent children has increased 12 per cent since V-J Day. The number of general assistance cases has increased 28 per cent."

Calling attention to the limited resources of communities in different parts of the nation, Altmeyer said:

"In the fiscal year 1944-45, expenditures for general assistance represented \$1.68 per inhabitant in one State and about 2 cents per inhabitant at the other extreme."

"The Social Security Board believes that extension of general assistance, so that adequate aid will be available to any needy person, is an essential part of an adequate program of social security. Federal financial participation in general assistance should follow the arrangements already existing under the Social Security Act for special types of public assistance."

Arguing for special aid to low-income States, Mr. Altmeyer said that "the poorer States have a larger proportion of needy persons, but receive not only less Federal aid per needy person but also less Federal aid in proportion to total population."

AFL ASKS SENATE TO KILL PENDING ANTI-LABOR BILLS

Washington, D. C.—In the midst of Senate debate on anti-strike legislation, AFL President William Green tossed a final appeal for reason and restraint. He urged defeat of all pending bills to restrict labor's freedoms.

Obviously referring to the coming election campaigns, Mr. Green said in his letter to all Senators that enactment of anti-union legislation "would be greatly resented by laboring men and women everywhere and all their friends."

This warning came as the Senate prepared to act on the vicious Case Bill, which was adopted by the House of Representatives, and the milder substitute drafted by the Senate's Education and Labor Committee.

Anti-labor forces in the Senate were seeking to take advantage of the hate propaganda which reached its crest during the coal strike to push through stringent amendments crippling the right to strike and severely regulating organized labor.

All labor, including unions with perfect records of co-operation during the war, would be affected and penalized by such legislation, Mr. Green pointed out in his letter. He also called attention to the fact that organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers, which has constantly sought to destroy trade unions, are backing the new legislative assault on American workers' rights.

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Green Asks Truman To Veto Case Bill

THIS IS AMERICA!



Courtesy Appreciate America, Inc.

New York City—AFL President William Green publicly called upon President Truman to veto the obnoxious Case Bill which is designed to destroy the labor movement in America.

In a challenging address to the fifth biennial convention of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union here, the AFL chief warned:

"If the President signs this bill, the seven million members of the American Federation of Labor will be rebels as long as it remains on the statute books of the Nation.

"We will never accept it willingly. We will carry on an unyielding fight to have it repealed.

"We will use our political strength to the utmost to elect members of Congress who will vote to repeal such abhorrent legislation.

Discussing the effects of the Case Bill, Mr. Green declared: "I do not see how we can function successfully if it becomes law."

Mr. Green delivered these two stinging indictments against specific provisions of the Case Bill:

1—He charged that Congress is making "permanent" its "monumental, temporary mistake" contained in the Smith-Connelly Act by providing for compulsory so-called "cooling off" periods which foment strikes instead of preventing them.

2—He alleged that the Case Bill, by authorizing damage suits against labor organizations, proposes to re-enact in America a thousand-fold the oppressive practices which shocked the American people in the Danbury Hatters' case.

In that case, he told the union delegates, members of their own organization had their homes sold out from under them in order to satisfy judgments found against the hat workers in Danbury, Conn.

Employers could harass unions to extinction, if the Case Bill becomes law, by tying them up with litigation and forcing them to spend all their funds and time in defending damage suits, Mr. Green said. Lawyers would have a year-round "open season" in pressing such damage suit, whether they had any justification or not.

Mr. Green also leveled severe criticism against the provisions of President Truman's emergency strike control bill, but said its effects would be limited because it applied only to cases where the Government had seized industries.

Nevertheless, Mr. Green declared that even with the amendments adopted by the Senate this bill would permit the Attorney General to revive Government by injunction and jail union leaders and strikers. He said the measure was "ill-advised" and unnecessary because the strike emergencies it was intended to cope with have passed.

After reviewing labor's contributions to victory in the war and noting the drop in "take-home" pay after V-J Day, Mr. Green remarked that strikes must be expected in a period of drastic economic changes, although "all of us deplore strikes."

The AFL aims to minimize strikes in favor of conferenceable settlements, he said. But, he added, when employers "sit as a negative force in a collective bargaining wage conference and refuse to yield even to the slightest degree, what can the workers do?"

"I think a clear investigation of many of the causes of these strikes will show that the employers who participated in the conferences were as much or more to blame for the strikes than were the workers who participated in the strikes," Mr. Green remarked. "And now as a result of it all we have before Congress some most vicious legislation."

Mayor O'Dwyer, arriving to greet the 160 delegates as Max Zaritsky, president of the union was expressing views similar to those of Mr. Green, drew prolonged applause by declaring: "Labor insists on holding its gains." The Mayor urged the convention to go on record in favor of extending the Office of Price Administration's life with its present powers and of establishing a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission.

Mr. Zaritsky, whose annual report to the convention calls for continuation of the union's wartime no-strike pledge during the reconversion period, held that an "old and familiar pattern" is evident in current anti-strike and labor-control legislation.

He said that "enemies of the labor movement" (Please Turn to Page 4).

DR. ELIOT BACKS PURPOSE OF NATIONAL HEALTH BILL

Washington, D. C.—Medical care and health services can be brought within reach of all mothers and children under the terms of the proposed national health bill, Dr. Martha M. Eliot, associate chief of the Children's Bureau of the Labor Department, told the Senate Education and Labor committee.

Urging the bill in its entirety, Dr. Eliot recommended particularly its maternal, child health and crippled children's provisions, recognizing in the latter a plan to build upon existing programs now in operation under the Social Security Act.

CONGRESS HOLDING CLUB OVER LABOR IN DISPUTES

Washington, D. C.—Congress is trying to hold a legislative club over labor, ready to swing with new restrictive laws if either the coal or railroad disputes get out of hand.

After a week of debate on anti-labor proposals, the Senate is still engaged in a bitter fight over the Case bill and amendments proposed by hostile Senators to deal with specific controversies involved in the coal strike.

One group of reactionary Senators, led by the pettifoggish Byrd of Virginia, has marshalled its forces in support of an amendment requiring joint administration of any health or welfare fund established through collective bargaining in industry.

This amendment is aimed at forestalling the United Mine Workers' demand for a health and welfare fund which would be administered solely by the union.

Friends of labor in the Senate were carrying on a last-ditch fight to prevent enactment of this amendment and even more sweeping legislation. (Please Turn to Page 4).

TRUMAN SIGNS BILL FOR 3,000 AIRPORTS

Washington, D. C. — President Truman signed a bill under which \$500,000,000 will be spent by the Federal Government in the next six years for construction of 3,000 new airports throughout the Nation. The program will give the United States an air network far outranking any the world has ever seen.

The vast fund will be used to help any state, city or local agency that desires to build an airfield and is willing and able to put up half the funds needed.

The Federal program will be administered by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, which will channel the funds primarily to small fields suitable for private flying and feeder air lines.

The money will be apportioned to the states according to area and population. From this it is believed the bulk of the funds will be allocated to Texas, California, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, and Ohio.

NEW LOCAL SET-UP FOR COLORED WORKERS

An American Federation of Government Employees local was set up this week for the Negro government workers of Charlotte and vicinity, under the direction of E. M. Belch, president of the Charlotte local of the A. F. G. E. President Belch reports that much interest is being shown by the colored workers in the new local, which will have its own officers, but will operate under the laws of the parent local union. The union will also have its own meeting dates.

Meetings are being held at Bethlehem Community Center at First and Caldwell Streets on the first and third Wednesday nights each month.

The meeting this week was largely attended and many new members were taken with the union.

MEDIATION BOARD AVERTS 37 N. Y. STATE STRIKES

Albany, N. Y. — Thirty-seven threatened strikes throughout New York State were averted by efforts of the State Board of Mediation in March, the State Labor department announced. Fifteen other disputes which reached the strike stage were ended during the month with the help of the board.

Wages were the focal point in nine of the strikes occupying the board's attention in March. The other cases centered about such issues as union recognition, contract renewal, closed shop, and layoffs.

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN VOTED BY SENATE GROUP

Washington, D. C.—A declaration for equal pay for women in industry and for giving the Secretary of Labor the task of seeing that they get it was voted by a Senate Education and Labor subcommittee.

Reporting to the full committee, the subcommittee asserted that a wage differential "based on sex is an inequity in compensation standards and constitutes an unfair labor practice." The report stated further that such differentials lead to labor disputes, lower wages of men as well as women, prevent maintenance of a proper standard of living, endanger national security and obstruct commerce.

HOURLY EARNINGS AT PEAK

Washington, D. C.—A new peak of \$1.145 in average hourly earnings in 25 industries was reached in March, a study by the National Industrial Conference Board revealed. This, the board reported, was 50.9 per cent above January, 1939, and 94.1 per cent above the average for 1929.

25 PER CENT WAR WORKERS FOUND OUT OF JOBS

Washington, D. C.—In a formal report on workers' experiences in the "first phase of reconversion," the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Labor department declared one out of every four former war workers was involuntarily unemployed five to seven months after V-J Day, an even larger proportion had moved from the communities in which they held war jobs, and those who still had jobs had taken sharp cuts in weekly earnings sufficient to cut their purchasing power below that of 1941.

In contrast to the experiences of war workers, non-war workers held their jobs and maintained their earnings much more generally, the survey showed. Only five per cent of these were unemployed and less than seven per cent had migrated. More than three-fourths continued at work in the plants where they were employed last spring. War workers who kept their jobs or found new ones were earning 31 per cent less a week than on war work, while weekly earnings of non-war workers were down only 10 per cent over the same period.

NON-FARM JOBS INCREASE

Washington, D. C.—So rapidly did industry expand last month that the number of non-agricultural employes throughout the nation increased to 36,721,000, the highest level since the close of the war, the Labor Department reported.