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LABOR—U. S. A.

Washington, D. C.—The fourth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, included the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

A CONGRESSMAN LOOKS AT CONGRESS

By Rep. Andrew J. Biemiller of Wisconsin

As a member of Congress, I cannot take pride in its record on domestic issues during the session now drawing to a close.

When the war ended, our Nation had a wonderful opportunity to strengthen its peace time structure and to chart a course which would promote the prosperity and security of all the American people.

President Truman rose to the occasion and presented a far-reaching program to Congress to carry out these objectives. But Congress struck out in the clutch.

Let me say that I do not believe any Government can cure all the ills of mankind by passing a law, or a set of laws.

But we did have the opportunity during this session to mitigate some of the evils which beset our economy by simple and direct action. No such action was taken by Congress.

For instance, many of the leaders of our country and organized labor felt it was important to prevent future depressions resulting from mass unemployment. A sound and workable Full Employment Bill was drafted, but Congress killed it and then dressed up its ghost in the same clothes.

Four million American families still have to struggle along on substandard wages of 40 cents an hour, because the House Rules Committee buried amendments to raise the minimum wage to 65 cents.

Millions of returning veterans and war workers can't find a decent home, but obstructionists on the House Banking and Currency Committee pigeon-holed the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill which would have stimulated the construction of 15 million new homes in the next ten years.

I could go on with this indictment at length, citing Congressional failures on price control and health insurance legislation, among many others. But my purpose is not merely to condemn. The big question is what can be done about this situation.

The remedy lies with you, the people of the United States. You hold the answer in your vote next November. If you want a better life for yourself, if you would like to see a stronger America in the future, you should vote to defeat the reactionaries from both parties who joined to obstruct the President's program.

To those who are disappointed by the record of this Congress, I say "do not become discouraged." This is just a temporary setback. No one can stop the clock of progress. If we keep on fighting with the courage of our convictions for greater human welfare in our land, we are bound to win in the end.

THE MOUNTAIN BRINGS FORTH A MOUSE

By Nelson Cruikshank, Social Insurance Director for the AFL

The House Ways and Means Committee decided this week to freeze social security again—for the fourth time in a decade.

Behind this action lies an interesting story—a story which should arouse the indignation of the American people.

A year and a half ago, when Congress last voted to clamp the lid down on social security, the American Federation of Labor protested so vigorously that the House Ways and Means Committee agreed to undertake a thorough study of the entire Social Security Structure. The House of Representatives voted a \$50,000 appropriation for the study and the committee proceeded to hire a staff of experts to conduct it.

These experts issued their report last January—742 pages of fine print and charts. It is a careful and competent piece of work and lends invaluable support to the position long taken by the American Federation of Labor, that the Social Security system badly needs extensive overhauling.

Abundant evidence was presented in the report to prove our contentions that:

First, the Social Security tax must be increased from its present rate of one per cent to place

the program on a sound financial—or to use an insurance term—actuarial basis.

Second, present benefits are inadequate and even lower than relief payments to the aged in most States.

Third, coverage of Old Age and Survivors insurance should be extended to the other half of American workers not now protected—such as agricultural workers, domestic employees and those who work for non-profit and charitable institutions.

Fourth, State unemployment compensation laws now in effect are woefully deficient.

Following the submission of this report, the House Ways and Means Committee held a long series of public hearings at which witnesses from all walks of life gave an impressive account of the need for improved Social Security laws.

After all this—the \$50,000 investigation and four months hearings—the Committee now has approved a bill which could have been thrown together in a couple of hours and which ignores the findings of its own experts and outside witnesses.

The new bill proposes to freeze the tax rate at one per cent again; to bring maritime workers under State unemployment laws—but without the safeguards requested by these workers; to provide some interim protection to the families of veterans who die during the next three years, and to raise by \$5 per case the monthly amount of grant from the Federal Government to match State funds for needy aged, the blind and dependent children.

Some of these things are good.

7 AFL UNIONS TO FORM MARITIME COUNCIL

Washington, D. C.—Leaders of seven international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor have accepted invitations to attend a meeting in Chicago to set up a Maritime Council within the AFL.

The meeting will be held while the AFL Executive Council, which authorized such a maritime department at its last meeting, is in session in Chicago. The executive group will open its session August 12.

The organizations which have accepted bid to the conference are the Seafarers, Longshoremen, Mates, and Pilots, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, Union of Operating Engineers, Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers, and the Commercial Telegraphers Union of North America.

STORE WORKERS GRANTED SAN FRANCISCO PAY RISE

San Francisco—Vote of the Department Store Employees' Union (AFL), by a margin of 5 to 1, to accept a general \$4.40 across-the-board raise was announced here. Basic wage under the new agreement, retroactive to May 1, 1946, will remain in effect until May 1, 1947, and will be \$32.50 a week.

Settlement of the dispute was effected on joint recommendations of the San Francisco Employers' Council and the special committee of the San Francisco Labor Council.

Send in your news items. Local Unions and Auxiliaries. We need your co-operation.

but so very far from good enough. Truly, "the mountain labored and brought forth a mouse."

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