

Editorial

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The Labor Journal will not be responsible for opinions of correspondents, but any erroneous reflecting upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Labor Journal will be gladly corrected when called to the attention of the publisher. Correspondence and Open Forum opinions solicited.



A MAJOR FACTOR IN INDUSTRIAL PEACE

Health and welfare fund clauses in collective bargaining contracts were approved by Labor Secretary Schwollenbach in his annual report to Congress as "an effective and flexible means of providing greater social security through collective bargaining."

In his report to Congress Mr. Schwollenbach summarized the year's developments in labor legislation and emphasized that stabilization of the economy would help more than any other thing to promote industrial peace.

He stated that under stabilized conditions, "collective bargaining can best play its creative role in advancing the standard of life of the workers and in protecting their status as human beings. Lack of stability, however, may provide the basis for a renewal of the industrial strife that characterized much of the first post-war year."

It was in connection with his discussion of stabilized industrial conditions that he spoke approvingly of the increasing use of health and welfare funds in union contracts. While he felt that the general economic outlook for the immediate future is favorable if price stability is quickly achieved, Mr. Schwollenbach felt that "the decisive test for the post-war economy will come when the deferred demand of the war years for capital goods and equipment has been met."

He added that "our economic health must depend mainly, of course, upon the foresight and adaptability of labor, management and farmers in working together through their organizations and their Government for general, sustained prosperity."

The Secretary urged that "stability must be assured at a high level of output, and the products of industry must be equitably distributed among those who co-operate in their production. We need a clearer understanding of the fact that farm income and the welfare of farmers are inseparably linked with earnings and real incomes of city workers."

"There is general agreement that steps to improve efficiency and increase the flow of goods in short supply is vital alike to the success of the new price controls and to the advancement of wages and living standards."

Turning to the question of labor disputes, the Secretary "warned against the dangers of punitive legislation enacted in haste and without comprehensive study, and pointed out that industrial strife is actually a symptom of basic economic maladjustments."

"Insecurity is a primary cause of industrial unrest," he declared. "In a period of reconversion, with rising prices, scarcity of commodities and the consequent threat to worker's living standards, peaceful adjustments are much more difficult to attain. Hence the problem of labor-management disputes could not be solved by legislation limited to the establishment of techniques for the expeditious settlement of such disputes."

COST OF LIVING SHOWS DECLINE

The high cost of living came closer to the reach of the average worker as the increasing supplies of foods and other important commodities, in addition to a rising consumer resistance, eased the situation in general commercial channels toward the end of the week of January 12.

The down-trend in food prices was marked by lower quotations for wheat, cotton, oats, cattle, butter, eggs and poultry. The decline had been under way for at least a month.

Isolated declines for industrial products also developed, including silver, hides and wools.

In New Hampshire the Public Service Company announced a reduction in electric rates despite rising costs. The same State announced a drop in retail and wholesale cream prices.

Some New York City chain food stores reduced butter 1 cent a pound. The wholesale market dropped 2 to 2 1/4 cents a pound, piling up losses for the last three weeks to around 20 cents and for this week alone to 8 to 9 cents. The Chicago wholesale market also declined.

In the Chicago grain futures market, wheat dropped 5-8 to 1 1/2 cents. Oats lost 1-2 to 1 cent.

Talk of consumer resistance to present prices for some textiles helped drop cotton futures at New York \$4 a bale at one time.

Raw cotton for spot delivery dipped \$1.25 a bale at New Orleans.

Textile merchants in New York reported hesitant demand for heavy goods for commercial purposes.

The official New York price of silver dropped 1 3/4 cents an ounce for the third setback of the week.

Hide futures at New York declined an outside of nine-tenths of a cent a pound and cocoa futures nearly as much. Cattle at Chicago were 25 cents a hundredweight lower. Some grades of poultry again declined at New York, putting losses for the last month at from 15 to 20 cents a pound. Eggs also slipped.

KEY TO BETTER RELATIONS

The real solution to labor relations problems in the United States today rests in the hands of employers and other groups who are waging warfare upon the organized workers of America.

This was the declaration of Lewis G. Hines, National Legislative Representative of the American Federation of Labor, speaking on the American Forum of the Air program.

"Will new labor legislation help our economy? The answer to this depends on what kind of legislation," he said. "Legislation improving our social security standards, as sponsored by the American Federation of Labor, would

THE MARCH OF LABOR

UNCLE SAM SAYS

You have heard people say, "why save at a time when prices are going up?" We cannot all be economists; and it is perhaps just as well, for they seem to differ a great deal among themselves about the future. But we all know this: A man who saved a dollar 18 years ago is better off today than the man who didn't; and other things being equal, the man who saves a dollar today will be better off in 1957 than the man who doesn't.

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TEXT OF GREEN'S LETTER
ON PORTAL PAY POLICY
Washington, D. C.—Following is the text of a letter from AFL President William Green to all affiliated unions, outlining the Federation's policy on the portal-to-portal pay issue. It was accompanied by a detailed memorandum containing the latest and most accurate information on workers' rights with regard to portal-to-portal pay:
In recent weeks, wide publicity has been given to court actions filed by certain labor unions in an attempt to recover back pay for their members for travel time and other time spent on employer's property, such as changing clothes and preparing for work, claiming this to be time worked within the meaning of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.
Very few of these suits have been brought by unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It is the long-established policy of the American Federation of Labor to rely upon collective bargaining through direct negotiations between unions and employers to settle differences between them regarding wages, hours and working conditions of the workers concerned. What constitutes time worked for the purpose of figuring straight time and overtime compensation, can best be determined by labor and management over the bargaining table.
Any union or any employer operating under a contract mutually agreed upon, is under obligation first to present to the other party of the agreement any question that may arise regarding the terms of that agreement.
Appeal to authority before all the voluntary means of resolving differences have been exhausted, invites invasion of the right of labor and management to contract about their affairs. Such untimely and unwarranted resort to administrative or judicial intervention is inconsistent with the mutual rights and responsibilities established by employers and unions through private contract in a free society.
All national and international unions affiliated with the Metal Trades Department of the AFL and a number of other AFL affiliates have officially declared it to be their policy to make the definition of time worked, within the meaning of the Fair Labor Standards Act or otherwise, subject to collective bargaining negotiation in preference to litigation. National and international unions affiliated with the AFL are free to make their own policy determination in this matter.
However, it is important for all affiliated unions to have full factual information about the questions involved in this problem. The enclosed Statement on Travel Time has been prepared for the use of our national and international unions to help them in determining their course of action.

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PATIENTS IN SINGAPORE'S GENERAL HOSPITAL WERE RECENTLY SADDLED WITH SOME RATHER CURIOUS ATTENDANTS - SHORT-TERM PRISONERS FROM THE LOCAL PRISON. WHEN CHINESE AND INDIAN WARD ATTENDANTS STRUCK FOR HIGHER WAGES THE HOSPITAL CALLED FOR STRIKEBREAKERS. WHEN NOT ENOUGH VOLUNTEERS WERE FORTHCOMING, 40 SHORT-TERM PRISONERS WERE BROUGHT FROM THE JAIL.

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