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Charlotte Labor Journal

A Newspaper Dedicated To The Interests of Charlotte Central Labor Union and Affiliated Crafts—Endorsed By North Carolina Federation of Labor and Approved By The American Federation of Labor.

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Green Says Authors Of Anti-Labor Legislation Represent 'Defeatist And Negative' Attitudes

Disputes Panel Is Selected

Washington, D. C.—Announcement by the Labor Department of selection of a panel of 150 labor arbitrators, cleared for competence and impartiality by both labor and management, was hailed in industrial circles as a definite step toward more widespread acceptance of voluntary arbitration throughout the American industrial field.

The announcement, made by Edgar L. Warren, director of the U. S. Conciliation Service, was regarded as a long stride toward further advancement of the practice broadly accepted during the war of umpire settlement of labor-management differences. Creation of a pool of accepted arbitrators, spokesmen for both sides in the labor-management picture, said, was one of the most marked advancements toward voluntary arbitration. It is expected to eliminate charges of Labor Department bias. Warren said.

This panel is made up entirely of men recommended by regional labor-manegement advisory committees operating in the seven regions of the Conciliation Service and by the National Labor- Management Advisory Committee.

Almost 90 percent of the agreements between labor and management, it is estimated, include clauses providing for the use of an arbitrator whenever the parties are unable themselves to settle differences arising over the interpretation of the language of their contract. The General Motors, Ford and Chrysler contracts, the garments trades' agreements, and many others provide for impartial umpires.

The use of voluntary arbitration to settle disputes over new contract terms, however, is still comparatively new.

"When an employer and a union have agreed voluntarily to submit their dispute to arbitration but are unable to agree on the arbitrator," Warren explained, "the Conciliation Service, on joint written request of both parties, will select an arbitrator for them from the natonal panel of arbitrators. In this way, both parties can be confident that the man selected for them will have received bipartisan approval as a competent and impartial arbitrator."

BRADLEY ASKS LIMIT ON VET ALLOWANCES TO AVERT ABUSES

Washington, D. C. — Veterans Administrator Omar Bradley has advocated a limit to subsistence allowances for veterans. While testifying before the House Commitee on Veterans Affairs, General Bradley declared that such allowances "can be exploited as a bonus" unless they are limited to on-the-job training in "actual courses within the meaning of the law."

The General advocated that Congress establish a ceiling on the payment of subsistence to veterans and testified that otherwise the Veterans' Administration "is given power actually to determine national policy."

"I believe it unwise to concentrate that power in the hands of one man," Bradley said, and added, "one man could conceivably commit the Government to the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars in excess of that envisioned by Congress."

Tells House Labor Committee Bills Aim At Collective Dealing

Washington, D. C. — AFL President William Green charged before the House Labor Committee that sponsors of anti-labor bills have taken a "defeatist" and "negative" position in attempting to penalize unions throughout the Nation because of scatttered disputes.

Empatically denying that labor leaders have shown any reluctance to cooperate with law makers in the discussions of preparation of legislation affecting workers, Mr. Green declared:

"Opposition to legislation that is ill-considered, that will produce incalcuable harm to our national economy and welfare, is the affirmative duty of every constructive citizen and group. The truth is that the sponsors of this anti-labor legislation, in their defeatist and negative attitude, proceed on the completely repudiated premise that the organized American worker is callously indifferent to his obligations. But we have faith in the American worker and it is fully justified by his record."

Legislative proposals offered in the House to ban the closed shop, secondary boycotts, the union dues check-off plan, impose cooling-off periods, require registration and financial accounting by unions, forbid minority strikes, outlaw jurisdictional disputes, emasculate the Wagner Act and to require compulsory arbiteration were vigorously condemned by Mr. Green.

Mr. Green emphatically challenged "the very basis on which such legislation has been presented to the country," and declared that such measures "are claimed to be a remedy against strikes—they are not."

Such legislation, he told the committee, is directed, not against strikes, but against the process of collective bargaining.

"Does this legislation deal with the causes of industrial unrest that has swept the country since V-J Day?" he demanded. "Does it reach the issues that were behind the disputes through which we have gone? The answer is categorically—No."

Reviewing the major bills one by one, Mr. Green opened his discussion with an examination of the Smith and Miller measures to outlaw the union shop, even in cases where 100 per cent of the workers involved had selected a union and desired to work under union conditions.

Sponsors of such legislation, the AFL chieftain declared, "portray a profound ignorance of economics and economic philosophy and a deep misunderstanding of the purposes and functions of the union-security principles."

"There is probably no right other than the right to strike which organized labor deems more consecrated or more indispensable to its continued maintenance and well being. It treasures its right to seek and obtain union-security agreements through collective bargaining," he added.

Regarding bills to prohibit boycotts, Mr. Green declared:

"Only an enraged and vindictive determination to punish labor, no matter what the effect on labor's and the entire public's welfare will be, can explain this objective. It simply ignores and confounds the most elemental realities of the free enterprise, competitive system."

The proposal to forbid further use of the union dues check-off system, Mr. Green asserted, appeared to him of doubtful wisdom "since there has been no serious criticism of this system on moral or other grounds," and would risk the automatic termination of so many collective agreements which assure stability in industrial relations and continued producton of necessary commodities."

Mr. Green declared that organized labor "takes strenuous exception" to proposals to force a "cooling-off period" during periods of labor disputes while government agencies are mediating such differences. He explained in detail why labor opposes such legislation, including the fact that it is an unwarranted invasion of an essential liberty and a violation of the 13th amendment to the Constitution "prohibiting involuntary servitude."

The proposal to require labor organizations to obtain government licenses, "and thus exist only at the sufferance of the Government," and to make reports on their internal affairs, including finances, Mr. Green ascerted, would be impractical. Although he expressed no great objection to the matter of registration, he took a firm stand against the finance reporting, which would give employers a full view of a union's financial position and might have an effect upon the employer's willingness to enter into collective bargaining and show good faith in making counter proposals to those submitted by union leaders.

TRUMAN SEEKS $353,398,633 TO MEET U. S. PAY RAISES

Washington, D. C.—Congress has been asked by President Truman to provide $353,398,633 to pay the cost of the several laws that raised the salaries of Federal workers as of last July 1. The total cost of the acts, according to the President, is $598,986,000 which breaks down as follows:

Cost of the flat 14 per cent raise for the less than a million white-collar employes is $417,056,650; but 56 per cent of this amount was absorbed with available funds.

The acts gave postal employes a flat $500 increase.

Ask For Inquiry

Washington, D. C.—A sweeping congressional investigation into military encroachments on civilian employment in the Government service was urged by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Government Employes (AFL), in session here. The council authorized James B. Burns, national president, to make immediate representations as seem adequate to the executive agencies concerned.

The council adopted resolutions condemning the use of military personnel in civilian positions, the employment of decommissioned personnel in high grade civilian positions after dismissal of career employes through reduction in force procedure without giving such civilian employes the opportunity to compete fairly for such positions, and the widespread reduction of salaries and wages of civilian employes of the Army and Navy without giving the employes the opportunity to be heard in connection with such so-called reclassification programs.

It was pointed out in the resolutions that not only career employes, but veterans generally, are discriminated against in the utilization of decommissioned personnel without any basis of fair competition.

The council condemned these practices as arbitrary and discriminatory, destructive of the morale of all employes, unfair and un-American, and contrary to the principles of good personnel administration and to the letter and spirit of the civil service merit system.

National President Burns is instructed to take any appropriate steps necessary to stop these "iniquitous practices," including a request of Congress that a full investigation be made and representations to the departments concerned that the practices be discontinued.

Mr. Burns also was instructed to seek inclusion of prohibitory provisions in appropriation measures against employment of military personnel in civilian positions.

The council commended Senator Langer's recent speech in the Senate in which he came out strongly against indiscrimniate firing and indiscriminate abuse of Government employes, pointing out that such tactics undermine employe morale. The council also commended the American Federation of Labor for a similar stand taken at its convention in Chicago last fall.

WOULD LET THE TEEN-AGERS VOTE

Washington, D. C.—A proposed Constiutional amendment which would give all United States citizens of 18 years or older the right to vote, has been offered by Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, Republican, of Michigan. The voting age is now 21, except in the State of Georgia, where it is 18.

"MADE IN JAPAN" PRODUCTS

Washington, D. C.—The United States Commercial Co., a government subsidiary of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, has announced that goods stamped "Made in Japan," which were barred by public opinion from American stores since Pearl Harbor, will begin to appear this Spring.

Federation Attacks Extension Of Laws To Import Workers

Washington, D. C. — Vigorous opposition to pending legislation which would extend for one year, until June 30, 1948, the emergency law permitting importation of foreign farm labor into the United States, was expressed before the House Agriculture Committee by two leading spokesmen for the American Federation of Labor.

Walter J. Mason, AFL national legislative representative, and H. L. Mitchell, president of the National Farm Labor Union, sharply condemned the proposal as unwarranted, an injustice to veterans seeking work, and a plan which would prove extremely costly to American taxpayers.

"The American Federation of Labor is firmly opposed to this or any other legislation providing for the importation of foreign labor, particularly at a time when unemployment is increasing daily and is now well over the two million mark," Mason told the committee. "It is our considered judgment that it will be a menace to labor in this country and become a serious threat to our entire economy.

"Since 1943 Congress has appropriated over $100,000,000 to this program. The cost of recruiting, transporting, housing and guaranteeing of wage to foreign woekers for another year would cost in the neighborhood of $25,000,000 to $50,000,000. Surely, it is not tenable two years after the end of hostilities to spend this additional sum on a wartime emergency problem which no longer exists. Particularly is this true in view of the fact that the major portion of foreign labor recruited under this program is provided for large corporate farmers, beet sugar industry, and to some extent commercial processors.

"The farm wage rates for the entire country on January 1, 1947, averaged $4.83 per day without board. Rates per day without board were about $8 in the Pacific states and averaged less than $4 in the South. The lowest rates are paid in the east-south-central states, whree they averaged $3.28 per day without board. (Farm Labor Bulletin January 13, 1947, United States Department of Agriculture.)

"Although the Department of Agriculture maintained that this program has not brought about a reduction in wage rates, there is no assurance that the continuation of this program will not preserve a status quo below the wages that might be obtained by domestic farm labor if normal competition were permitted.

"The supporters of this bill are organizations representing large commercialized farm interests of this country. They expect Congress to continue a program which will subsidize large scale farm operations at the expense of unemployed domestic farm laborers. This would make it possible for them to maintain a substandard wage in this industry through a threat of bringing in foreign laborers.

"It is the opinion of the American Federation of Labor that serious consideration should be given to the possibility of utilizing the funds and provisions of this bill to recruit and furnish domestic labor from depressed rural regions for use in peak seasons in areas of scare labor supplies."

Mitchell, echoing Mason's warning, told the committee:

"This bill, which would permit continued importation of foreign labor for exploitation on the large scale industrialized farms of the nation, is the most wasteful and extravagant piece of legislation that this Congress may be called upon to consider.

"During the war there could be some justification for bringing in workers from Mexico, the British West Indies, and other foreign countries, to help out in areas where severe labor shortages existed.

"Over a million American ex-servicemen are now back on the farms and available for such employment as may be offered to them. Surely Congress is not going to continue a program that will take jobs away from these ex-servicemen and give them to foreign nationals instead."

NEBRASKA CLOSED SHOP BAN IS CHALLENGED BY THE A. F. L.

Lincoln, Nebr. — A test suit challenging the constitutionality of Nebraska's anti-closed shop amendment, approved last November, has been filed here by the American Federation of Labor.

Vote Bans Pay Suits

Washington, D. C.—Legislation declaring "null and void" the $5,785,000,000 Nation-wide accumulation of portal-to-portal pay claims—and prohibiting any further such portal pay actions—has been approved by a Senate Judiciary subcommittee. It is expected to go before the Senate within a week.

The subcommittee, acting unanimously, declared Congress should act promptly to "cure the situation" which it said threatens "financial ruin" of many employers and serious effects in Federal, State and local revenues.

The bill would outlaw present claims arising from activities performed outside the working day as understood by contract, custom or understanding, and bar such claims in the future.

Besides prohibiting what it calls windfalls," the bill would require that all claims for wages and overtime under the Wage-Hour Act must be instituted within three years after the claims arise.

The bill is in two main parts:

1. Barring the portal suits.
2. Making them unprofitable.

The second part was written, Wiley explained, as insurance against the first part being knocked out in court, it would be inoperative otherwise.

But if it is invoked, the second section would:

1. Bar collection of extra damages.
2. Require that suits be filed by workers individually, rather than in groups.
3. Relieve the employer of paying the claimant's attorney.
4. Shift the burden of proof to the employe.
5. Recognize past settlements and permit future ones.

The subcommittee, which also included Senators Cooper (R., Ky. and Eastland (D., Miss.), said it believed the retroactive section would stand the test in court.

In addition, the report said, it is clear that Congress can cut off future portal pay claims. In that connection, the group laid down this summation:

"In general, time spent by an employe in activities engaged in before the commencement of and after the termination of his scheduled work day will not be compensable working time in the future unless compensable by reason of a contract, custom, practice or understanding."

The report made it clear that portal time of the United Mine Workers will not be affected by the bill because it is covered by contract.

The bill does not attempt to define what constitutes work, but the sub-committee gave some clarifying examples of the effect of its provisions.

JANUARY FIRE LOSSES SHOW SHARP INCREASE

New York—The National Board of Fire Underwriters report a sharp increase in fire losses in the nation during January. The estimated losses for the month totaled $57,180,000, an increase of 14.8 per cent over the same month in 1946.

Waste by fire in the year that ended with January was $568,859,000 or 23.5 per cent greater than in the previous twelve months and 77 per cent greater than in 1939. It was the largest yearly increase since 1939.