

WELL SUSTAINED DEMAND FOR LABOR IN MANY FIELDS SEEN BY EXPERTS

Washington, D. C.—Conditions in American labor market in February were relatively stable, with employment continuing high and production flowing to consumers in record peacetime volume, it was reported here by the United States Employment Service.

Robert C. Goodwin, USES director, declared in his report that, while for the Nation as a whole, unemployment increased slightly in February, with the coming of spring a well-sustained demand for labor may be expected in many fields.

"Not only is a considerable rise in prospect in the construction industry, but gains are also likely in heavy goods factories and their trade outlets," Mr. Goodwin said.

In February manufacturing employment continued the moderate gains of the past few months and rose 70,000 to a new post-war high of 15,100,000. Gains were concentrated in the durable goods groups, paced by the automobile industry which added more than 30,000 employes. Smaller gains of about one per cent were also reported in iron and steel, machinery, nonferrous metals, and the furniture group, all now operating at peak post-war levels.

"The beginning of the seasonal upturn in farm activity caused total employment to rise slightly to 55,500,000 in February, more than offsetting a decline in the non-farm sector.

"Construction was the only major group to report a substantial decline, showing a drop of 110,000. Employment in trade was also off slightly."

Mr. Goodwin said February reports from 82 major labor market areas showed only three reporting substantial employment gains—Detroit, Chicago, and Evansville, Ind. He added that further indication of the easing that has been taking place in recent months in the labor market was found in the failure of any area to indicate in its report that labor shortages were now impeding expansion.

"Labor demand for expansion purpose again declined in February," Mr. Goodwin said. "In general, material shortages, order cancellations, and marketing uncertainties continued to hinder employment expansion although employment continued at a high level.

In general, the areas which report increased labor requirements for coming months are areas which expect large seasonal expansions in construction and in food processing. Areas which anticipate sizeable employment increases in the next few months include Boston, Springfield and Holyoke, Mass.; Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N. Y.; Newark, Baltimore and Chicago."

LABOR DEPT. PLANS PROTEST ON MAJOR BUDGET SLASHES

Washington, D. C.—Secretary of Labor Schwollenbach will protest against the deep slash in his department's budget, made by the House Appropriations Committee when he appears before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Mr. Schwollenbach filed notice of his intention to fight the \$13,714,500 cut under the \$31,850,700 figure approved by the Budget Bureau and the President.

A Senate subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee will open hearings on the budget requests soon.

Mr. Schwollenbach will ask the Senate to restore the 43 per cent cut in operating expenses for the department and to vote for the full amount of \$103,758,700.

The public services rendered by the department would according to Mr. Schwollenbach, be reduced considerably if the budget cuts remain in effect. The reductions would have to be put into effect within a few weeks if the House action prevails since the House has insisted that the department must reduce immediately to meet the expenses of the accumulated annual leave of many employes to be laid off.

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STATE JOBLESS AID IN FIRST '47 QUARTER 40 PER CENT BELOW '46

Washington, D. C.—The level of unemployment benefits covered by State legislation in the first three months of 1947 is approximately 40 per cent below that of the first three months of last year, but has remained comparatively level in this most recent quarter.

This was revealed in a report issued by Waston B. Miller, Federal Security Administrator, after a nation-wide survey.

Shortly before issuance of the report, Senator Wiley of Wisconsin offered a resolution calling for realignment of assistance benefits and outlining a plan under which a study would be made of the entire social security system.

Wiley asserted it was "obvious" that benefits are too small in view of the increase in prices, and cited particularly that the average aid to 60,000 blind persons is \$33.67 a month, and that the average pay per family for dependent children is \$55.42.

The report of the FSA disclosed that about four workers out of every 100 covered under State programs were unemployed one week in January, February, and March, as compared with 6.8 workers out of 100 a year before. These ratios are based on continued claims for one week of each month as a percentage of the average monthly number of covered jobs in 1945.

The present ratio of 4.1 per cent reflects a seasonal rise that occurred since last November, when the low point of 3 per cent was reached after a steady decline in unemployment that began last spring.

Considerable variation was found in the individual State ratios, Mr. Miller said. While the ratio for most States in the first week of February was between 2 and 6 per cent, seven States, including such industrial States as Connecticut, Indiana, and Ohio, had a ratio of less than 2 per cent, and four States—California, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington—had ratios of more than 6 per cent.

In the last week of February, about 996,000 civilian workers were receiving benefits, Mr. Miller said.

The total amount of benefits in February was \$65,888,000 a drop of \$8,867,000 from the previous month. The average weekly benefit amount for unemployment insurance also dropped from \$18.11 in January to \$17.88 in February, the lowest amount since June, 1945. In the 18 months since then, the average weekly benefit amount rose to a high of \$19.11 in September, 1945, but has since declined.

The number of newly unemployed workers in the United States, as indicated by initial claims, dropped from 926,000 in the four weeks ended in January to 741,000 in February, a decline of 185,000 claims. Many of the initial claims in January were attributed to seasonal unemployment.

The Federal Security Administrator pointed out that there is a high rate of turnover among claimants. Of all who filed in February, 36 per cent were filing claims for a new period of unemployment for them. One-third—or 34 per cent—of all who filed during the month stopped filing before the month was over, either because they found jobs or dropped out of the labor market. Of those who stopped filing, less than one out of five did so because their benefit rights were exhausted.

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SCHWOLLENBACH TO ASK TRUMAN VETO OF PORTAL PAY BILL IN PRESENT FORM

Washington, D. C.—Expressing once more his grave fears that the portal-to-portal pay bill would only invite a flood of new law suits, Labor Secretary Schwollenbach told newsmen he would ask President Truman to veto the measure unless it is changed.

His comment came during a news conference discussion of a House-approved 13 million dollar cut in labor Department appropriation requests.

Schwollenbach observed that funds for the Wage and Hour Division and Labor Department Solicitor's Office had been substantially slashed. He said that the portal bill in Congress would bring on "a flood of law suits" concerning interpretations of the Wage-Hour Act as amended by the pending legislation.

The proposals in Congress are designed to wipe out demands by unions in pending law suits for six billion dollars back pay, as well as to curtail similar suits in the future. The suits seek back pay for time spent getting ready for work and walking to the work bench.

Meanwhile, conferees on the differences between the portal pay bills passed by Senate and House failed to reach agreement. Another meeting was set for April 10.

The Justice Department said that Attorney General Tom Clark was preparing a letter to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals at Cincinnati setting forth the Government's views on proposed dismissal of the Mount Clements portal-to-portal pay case.

It will be submitted to the court for consideration along with the agreement which Court Clerk John W. Menzies said had been entered into by the original parties to the suit for dropping the case. Justice officials said they had not participated in any agreement on the matter.

Clark has formally petitioned the Supreme Court to take the case directly from the district court, which disallowed the workers' claims for pay spent inside the premises of the Mount Clements, Mich. This was for the purpose of obtaining a prompt, final judgment raised in this suit and similar actions which have been taken by workers elsewhere.

AFL SERVICE WORKERS IN NEW YORK WIN PAY HIKE OF 15 MILLION A YEAR

New York City.—Increased wages of 21 and a half cents an hour, or a total of \$8.60 per week, were announced here by David Sullivan, president of Local 328, Building and Service Employees' International Union (AFL), on the basis of an arbitration award. The increase will benefit 25,000 lift operators and other workers in 4,000 buildings throughout this city and will amount to an estimated \$15,000,000 yearly pay jump.

William D. Rawlins, executive secretary of the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, estimated that the total rise in labor costs would come to \$25,000,000 when comparable increases to non-union workers were put into effect.

The new increases were the result of mediation and arbitration before Arthur S. Meyer, chairman of the State Mediation Board, under the terms of the so-called Frankenthaler - RAB agreement entered into by the union and the advisory board after a strike in October, 1945.

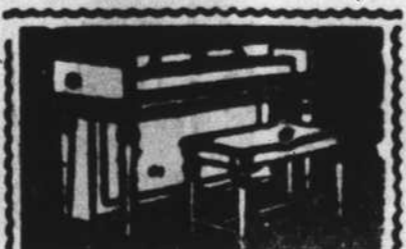
All union members will receive the weekly pay increase of \$8.60, Mr. Sullivan announced. He described the increase as the biggest won in any industry in the metropolitan area since V-J Day. The new schedules will become effective April 21 and the agreement will expire on April 20, 1948.

Mr. Rawlins said the size of the increase would inflict severe hardship on building owners particularly in the apartment field. The freezing of rents at the March, 1943, level had forced many landlords "into the red," even before

the new pay rise was ordered, he said. He advocated passing of rent control authority from the Federal Government to the states as a means of providing relief where it was needed without destroying the principle of control.

Minimum wage rates under the new schedule were listed by Mr. Sullivan, as follows: For elevator operators in Class A buildings the range will be \$43.58 in offices, \$42.33 in lofts and \$41.82 in apartments. The Class B minimums are \$42.33 in offices, \$40.40 in lofts and \$39.51 in apartments. Class C minimums are \$40.58 in offices, \$38.75 in lofts and \$37.20 in apartments.

Mr. Sullivan said most employes were now receiving more than the minimum. They work a 40-hour, 5-day week.



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