

# United Mine Workers Make Great Contract Gains

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# CHARLOTTE CARPENTERS GIVE \$1,200 FOR PHYSICIANS' ROOM AT MERCY HOSPITAL

## Southern Coal Operators Sign Pacts With Miners

LARGE PAY BOOST, CUT IN HOURS, WELFARE HIKE, ARE REPORTED

Washington, D. C. — The United Mine Workers Union signed a new contract, described as the "most beneficial" in the union's history, and voted to return to work immediately in the Northern coal mines.

At the same time it was reported that the Southern operators, who formed the hard core of die-hard opposition to the UMWA's terms, had capitulated and ordered their representatives to sign the agreements, and that at least ten of the 13 Southern operators had signed.

Thus the threat of a nation-wide soft coal strike vanished and the coal miners gained the greatest collective bargaining advance in years.

Pay increases provided for in the new pact are 45 cents an hour or \$3.05 a day. A new basic daily wage of \$13.05 is established and working hours are reduced from 9 to 8 with the lunch period increased from 15 minutes to a half hour. In addition, UMW president John L. Lewis gained a 100 per cent increase in the royalty paid for the miner's health and welfare fund.

The UMW escapes some of the harsh terms of the Taft-Hartley Act by the inclusion of a clause stating that the miners will work when they are "able and willing to work," and through the elimination of penalty clauses and the "no strike" guarantee included in previous contracts. The dues check-off is continued, but on a voluntary basis to conform to the requirements of the new law.

The UMW policy committee unanimously ratified at a night meeting the contract drafted at conferences between Mr. Lewis and the Northern coal operators during the July 4 weekend. No working time was lost between the expiration of the union's contract with the Government and the negotiation of the new contract with the private employers because the miners were on their annual vacation during the interim.

The agreement provides a wage increase of 45 cents an hour for the miners and other important concessions.

The agreement calls for a one-year contract although the operators had asked for a two-year agreement.

Other terms are as follows: A six-and-a-half-hour workday at the face of the coal. This is arranged by having an eight-hour day from portal to portal in place of the present nine-hour day. It would cover about one hour for travel time below ground and half an hour for lunch. The present lunch period is 15 minutes.

The union welfare fund will be doubled. At present 5 cents a ton is deducted for this fund. At the 1947 production rate this means close to \$30,000,000 a year. The new agreement will provide about \$60,000,000 a year.

The operators agreed to the Federal safety code.

The contract makes permanent the welfare fund originated under the UMW's agreement with the Federal government. It will be administered by a three-member board of trustees composed of union and employer representatives and a neutral party selected by them. Mr. Lewis was designated the miners' trustee and Ezra Van Horn, the employers' trustee.

## BULLETIN NO. 1

(This information issued by the American Federation of Labor explaining the Taft-Hartley Act, was prepared by the office of its General Counsel, Joseph A. Padway.)

Now that the Taft-Hartley Bill has become the law of the land, every labor union in the country will be faced with the tremendous task of understanding the very numerous and complex changes in the law and of adjusting their operations to these changes. In order to aid in this difficult task, the office of the General Counsel of the American Federation of Labor, will from time to time prepare and distribute bulletins and memoranda advising our affiliates of their new obligations and of various steps they should take to protect their interests.

This first bulletin is intended to anticipate and answer the more important practical questions immediately confronting labor unions, including questions arising under those provisions of the new law which became effective when it was passed on June 23.

At the outset, some comment must be made respecting the application of the Taft-Hartley Act to the building trades industry and other local industries. As is well known, the old Labor Board, as a matter of administrative discretion, did not apply the Act to such industries. However, that cannot be relied upon as a guarantee that the new Board will follow the same practice.

1. What is the status of existing agreements containing closed-shop or other union-security provisions?

All existing closed-shop, union-shop, maintenance-of-membership, or other union-security agreements entered into prior to June 23, 1947, are valid and enforceable for the full term of the agreement, even though that agreement has two or three or more years to run. It is important to note, however, that if any such existing agreement is renewed or extended, automatically or otherwise, at any time after August 22, 1947, then the union-security provision is no longer operative. Therefore, it is recommended that any presently existing agreements containing union-security clauses which have more than a year to run be left untouched unless it is deemed more important to obtain a new agreement at the expense of union-security.

2. May Unions negotiate new closed-shop or union-security agreements?

The new law on union-security agreements does not go into effect until sixty days after the enactment of the law, namely, August 22, 1947. Accordingly, until August 22 unions will retain the same freedom they now have to negotiate any type of closed shop or union-security agreement, but these can be made only for a period of one year.

In the case of any existing union-security agreement having no more than ten months to run, it is suggested that unions attempt to renegotiate or renew such agreement prior to August 22, 1947, thereby getting the benefit

of the added year of union security.

3. What is the status of check-off provisions?

All check-off agreements executed prior to June 23 continue in full force and effect until the expiration of such agreements or until July 1, 1948, whichever date occurs first. Check-off provisions, unlike closed-shop provisions, may not be extended or renewed or negotiated after June 23, 1947. After June 23 the new regulations on check-off agreements which require individual authorizations go into effect as do all agreements executed after that date. Any check-off agreement made after June 23, 1947, whether it be a new agreement or an extension or renewal of an old agreement, must comply with the new law relating to check-off provisions in order to avoid both criminal and injunctive proceedings.

After June 23, 1947, the only lawful kind of check-off agreement that may be negotiated is one whereby the individual employees involved have given to their employer written, individual authorizations, which authorizations may be revoked after one year or at the expiration of the agreement, whichever occurs first.

What is rendered unlawful are the so-called "automatic" check-off provisions whereby the employer, without the individual written authorization of each of the employees involved, makes direct payments to the union. Such agreements, if made after June 23, constitute a crime subject to a fine of \$10,000 or a year's imprisonment, or both, and in addition, are subject to immediate injunctions without any of the protections of the Norris-LaGuardia Act.

(To be continued in later issues)

## CALIFORNIA LABOR EDITORS PLAN PRESS CONFERENCE

San Francisco, Calif. — Representatives of AFL Councils publishing newspapers in nine counties, met to organize the Northern California AFL Labor Press Conference.

Jimmy Hicks, editor of the Sacramento Valley Union Labor Bulletin, was elected chairman, and Louis Burgess, editor of the East Bay Labor Journal, was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The officers of the conference were instructed to recommend that a similar organization be set up in southern California, with a view to holding a statewide conference and working out means of strengthening the AFL press throughout the state.

## VETO OF LABOR BILL ASKED

New Brunswick, N. J. — The City Commission called upon President Truman to veto the Taft-Hartley labor bill in the name of "fairness and decency," declaring that the measure is nothing more than a vicious attempt to reduce all of labor to a state of complete ineffectiveness. The resolution added that the few labor abuses that exist could have been eliminated with single and specific legislation.

## House Freezes Tax For Social Security

Washington, D. C.—The House passed unanimously a bill to freeze the social security payroll tax at 1 per cent until 1950.

Representative Reed (R., N. Y.) predicted it is "the last freeze" of present rates that Congress will approve.

The measure will block a two-billion-dollar annual increase in the social security levy beginning next January 1 if passed by the Senate and accepted by President Truman. But it provides increases beginning in 1950.

Without the freeze, the security level would jump automatically from 1 per cent against employees' wages and employers' payrolls to 2.5 percent against each starting the first of next year.

The present 1 per cent rate collects about \$1,500,000,000 annually and has accumulated \$8,700,000,000 in the security trust fund.

The "freeze" measure was presented after a Ways and Means Subcommittee, of which Reed is chairman, examined the needs of the trust fund from which the Government pays old age and survivors' insurance.

The new legislation provides for an increase in the tax to 1.5 per cent against wages and payrolls in 1950, and to 2 per cent in 1957 and thereafter. With the inclusion of this formula for future increases, the bill had the support of both Republicans and Democrats.

The measure also continues, to June 30, 1950, increases in Federal contributions, to needy aged persons, the blind, and dependent children.

The maximum Federal contribution for each needy case was raised from \$20 a month to \$25. States also contribute to these benefits.

## PULLMAN PORTERS HONOR LEADER OF AFL UNION

New York City.—A testimonial dinner honoring A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Pullman Porters (AFL), was given here at the Hotel Commodore. Mr. Randolph is also chairman of the National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission.

The affair, over which Leon Henderson presided, was given under the auspices of the Reunion of Old-Timers, an organization of labor, liberal, religious and civic leaders.

Mr. Henderson paid tribute to Mr. Randolph "for the inspiration and leadership which he has given in the past quarter of a century to causes engaged in eliminating racial and religious bigotry, intolerance and injustice."

## SWITCHMEN ELECT GLOVER TO SUCCEED T. C. CASHEN

Buffalo, N. Y.—Arthur J. Glover of Kansas City, Mo., was elected president of the Switchmen's Union of North America, succeeding Thomas C. Cashen, of Buffalo. The union's convention delegates gave Mr. Glover a winning vote of 134 to 81.

The 42-year-old Mr. Glover was formerly the Switchmen's general chairman on the Rock Island Railroad.

## Other Unions May Make Contributions

LOCAL CARPENTERS UNION INTERESTED IN UPBUILDING OF COMMUNITY

The Charlotte local of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America have voted to contribute \$1,200 for the building of a doctors' conference room in the new addition to Charlotte's Mercy hospital, according to an announcement made by Claude Nolen, business agent of the local, here this week. The Charlotte union's donation is to be made during the current drive of local Mercy hospital committees in their efforts to raise \$400,000 to take care of construction on the new proposed addition to the institution. It is understood that other unions affiliated with the Charlotte Central Labor union are contemplating making donations to this worthy cause.

## AFL Hits Farm Labor Bill; Says Conditions Deplorable

Washington, D. C. — In testimony before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, H. L. Mitchell, president of the AFL's Farm Labor Union, protested vigorously against the proposed farm labor bill. "In my opinion," he said, "the bill in its present form would merely perpetuate the deplorable conditions of farm laborers."

Condemning the legislation as favoring the interests of the big farm operators, Mr. Mitchell urged the committee to rewrite the measure to provide some degree of "decency and human dignity" for the three million farm laborers in the United States. He said:

"These workers who perform one of the most necessary functions in society, are now excluded from the protection for the young, the unemployed, and the aged. Likewise, they are generally denied health, medical, and educational services normally accorded other American working people. There have been no fundamental changes in the conditions affecting farm labor since John Steinbeck wrote about the Okies in 'Grapes of Wrath.'"

In additional testimony, Mr. Walter J. Mason, AFL legislative representative, attacked another provision of the bill establishing a permanent farm labor placement service within the Department of Agriculture. He branded the proposal as wasteful duplication of facilities already available in the public employment offices of the United States Employment Service.

The bill under consideration continues the importation of foreign labor for farm work, prohibits state or federal action to establish wage rates or hours of work for farm labor, and to all intents and purposes bans voluntary collective bargaining agreements between employers and farm laborers.

Office Employees of the Ingalls Shipbuilding Company at Pascagoula, Miss., have voted in an NLRB election for representation by the Office Employees International Union, AFL. The vote was 56 to 31. Vice President Bloodworth and President Hines of the Mississippi Federation worked together on this election. President Hines also reports that office employees of the Moss Point Paper Mill Company at Creole, Miss., have organized and a charter will be installed shortly.

The Carpenters' union is to be commended for its worthy action. Likewise, other unions making donations to the hospital fund will be making a noble contribution toward the betterment of local hospital conditions. Mercy hospital has a policy which never turns a sick person away, provided the staff has the room and facilities to provide necessary treatment. Those who contribute may rest assured that it will aid the Mercy authorities to better meet local demands.

## Meat Prices Shoot Higher As Consumers Are Hooked

Washington, D. C.—Meat prices are shooting skyward throughout the country.

In New York City, Jack Kranis, president of the National Meat Industry Council, stated that prices are currently higher than they were at the peak of the "black market" days under the OPA.

Mr. Kranis said increased foreign buying is the principal reason for the upswing in the price level. European buyers are willing to pay up to 4 cents a pound more than domestic buyers, he stated. Opposing his views were meat industry spokesmen in Chicago who denied that exports had been large enough to have any appreciable effect upon the domestic price structure.

"Summer months always see an increase in meat prices," said Carl Bromann, executive secretary of the Associated Food Dealers of Greater Chicago. "For the past 60 to 90 days retailers have been holding prices steady and wholesale prices have been going up. It reached the point where the only economical thing the retailer could do was raise his own prices."

Regardless of the reasons, the fact that meat prices are up again comes as disillusioning news to the vast majority of Americans whose incomes have by no means kept up with high flying prices. The news is double bitter in the light of statements made a year ago when industry leaders waged their successful campaign for the death of the OPA. Flowing promises were made that once Government controls were ended prices would come down.

It looks as though the National Association of Manufacturers and other big business propaganda agencies have played the American people for suckers again!