

Editorial

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AND DIXIE FARM NEWS

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OF
FREE PRESS
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CONGRESS FAR SHORT OF MANY AFL OBJECTIVES

The 81st Congress adjourned its first session after a last-minute redemption of some administration promises, but, it left a huge backlog of unfinished legislation supported by the American Federation of Labor in the general public interest.

The most outstanding failure was the defeat of proposals in both houses to repeal the vicious Taft-Hartley law.

Other disappointments included disapproval of President Truman's plan to create a department of welfare and the failure to bring to the floor of either house bills to establish a health insurance system and guarantee civil rights.

Unfinished but through one house were such important measures as those expanding social security, granting federal funds to state school systems and admission of displaced persons.

The 81st Congress in some respects is as difficult as the discredited 80th from the standpoint of enacting liberal legislation. AFL officials felt that the last-minute enactment of minimum wage, pay raises and military appropriations laws only partially redeemed some of the high promises made at the beginning of the session.

They pointed out that the AFL's 68th convention made it plain that the 8,000,000 AFL members expect the second session of the 81st Congress starting in January to make speedier progress on meeting the demands of all the people for Taft-Hartley repeal, broader social security, a health insurance system, aid for middle-income housing and education.

The convention was explicit on Taft-Hartley repeal:

"If the 81st Congress persists in its refusal to act affirmatively, we are prepared again to make our appeal to the people of this country and to make Taft-Hartley repeal the paramount issue of the 1950 congressional election campaign."

A similar strong policy is in effect on all measures providing for the greater welfare of all the people.

Joseph Keenan, director of Labor's League for Political Education, expressed discouragement over the filibustering and deadlocks which characterized the session just closed. But he saw a ray of hope also.

"The filibustering and delaying tactics engaged in by the Taft-Byrd coalition are a sign of weakness, not of strength," he said. "It is a sign that they can't pass reactionary legislation and that all they can do is obstruct and hinder the enactment of progressive legislation. This is a great change from the 80th Congress when bill after bill was passed by a two-thirds majority over President Truman's veto."

Mr. Truman himself said that he is "confident that the American people will agree that the results have been well worth while."

The session lasted 290 days, longest in peacetime in 27 years.

The Journal presents the box score of the 81st Congress, AFL objectives achieved in part:

1. Foreign Affairs—North Atlantic security treaty; military aid to noncommunist nation members of treaty at first year cost of \$1,314,000,000; Marshal plan aid of \$5,659,990,000 for a second year; extension of the reciprocal trade agreements.

2. National Defense—\$15,585,863,498 appropriated to national military establishment; armed services unification act strengthened; pay raises for military personnel amounting to \$3,044,000,000 annually; additional military public works in Alaska and Okinawa.

3. Government Reorganization—Six plans approved including transfer of U. S. Employment Service and Unemployment Compensation Division to the Department of Labor; salary raises for President Truman, Vice President Barkley and other top executives of \$1,083,000 a year.

4. Salary Raises for Government Employees—885,000 civil workers granted \$140 average annual raise and 500,000 post office employees \$120 a year more.

5. Minimum Wage—Raised from 40 to 75 cents an hour.

6. Housing—Additional low-rent housing, slum-clearance and aid to farm housing.

7. Rural Telephone Service—Federal loans authorized to extend rural telephone service.

8. Compensation for Disabled Government Employees—

15,000 cases under Public Law 357, and all employees who suffered functional injuries on the job since January 1940, eligible for specific payments; those injured in line of duty with dependents can receive up to 75 per cent of the base pay not to exceed \$525 per month.

Congress fell short on the following AFL goals:

1. Taft-Hartley Repeal—Failed to pass. 2. Department of Welfare—Killed by veto of President's reorganization plan. 3. Health Insurance. 4. Civil Rights. 5. Extending "Point Four" to Underprivileged Areas—No action.

The following AFL goals were achieved in one House:

1. Social Security—Bill almost meeting AFL proposals and called by President Green "greatest legislative victory of the session" passed by House.

2. Middle-Income Housing. 3. Poll Tax Repeal. 4. Displaced Persons—Passed by House. 5. Education—Annual appropriation of \$300,000,000 for federal aid to state school systems—passed by Senate.

HERE'S AFL HOUSING PROGRAM

The AFL housing program which President Green asks all Central Labor Unions to support is this:

1. Call on congressmen to enact the bill sponsored by Sen. John J. Sparkman providing middle-income housing through direct federal government loans at 3 per cent interest and the co-operative nonprofit form of organization.

2. Get behind public housing and slum clearance projects in local communities under the 1949 housing law, urging housing authorities in all cities and counties to take immediate action to obtain loans allotted by federal law for needed housing.

3. Support effective rent control until the supply of low-price housing units can be equalized with the demand.

4. Form local housing committees to work for these objectives and keep AFL headquarters informed.

Small Town Unionists

(Continued From Page 1)

to administer the schools. The union replied that teachers have the right collectively to protect their professional rights.

Just before the start of the 1949-1950 school year, the teachers' local called a strike. Irving Kuenzli, AFT secretary, went to Oglesby and tried to settle it. Strikes are illegal under the AFT constitution.

After conferring all night with school board officials and representatives of the union, Kuenzli obtained an agreement that a 58-hour truce would be called, during which the full board would be presented with this proposed settlement: (1) that Mrs. Mecum would be employed for her third year, but (2) she would agree in advance to resign at the end of the year.

The teachers, after debate, voted to accept the agreement. But the school board turned it down. The strike was resumed. School started. Both schools were kept closed by picket lines.

Another board meeting was held, at which angry parents and townspeople ordered the trustees to put Mrs. Mecum back to work. The board did, but four of the six trustees resigned. The Illinois state superintendent of public instruction charged the board had been coerced, and withheld state funds for financial aid to the school district.

Isaac Mason, the board president, an insurance man, was one of those who resigned. Then he ran for re-election. The trades and labor council put up James J. Scalliarini, a cement works foreman, against him.

When the ballots were counted October 6, the tally showed the labor ticket had carried nearly 2 to 1. Scalliarini polled 1,346 votes to 786 for Mason.



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