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AFL Requests UN To Back World Cut In Working Hours

New York.—The American Federation of Labor has called upon the United Nations to consider a program looking to the international reduction of working hours as a consequence of rising labor productivity to 40 hours and a possible further reduction to 30 hours.

The program, issued on behalf of the AFL's International Labor Relations Committee, was presented to UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie with a request that it be placed on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council, which will meet shortly.

The AFL also requested that the Convention of the International Labor Organizations limiting working hours to 40 weekly, which so far was only set "as a desirable goal, be introduced gradually in countries where working hours are still higher, and that a study be undertaken on a further reduction of working hours with a goal of a 30-hour week."

Reasons for seeking the cut in working hours, according to the AFL brief, were:

First, productivity per man-hour, particularly through the introduction of electronic devices, has increased.

Second, there has been a great increase in the number of "employables," as a result of longevity and rise in the birth-rate in many industrialized countries.

It was pointed out that the rate of productivity increase, according to index figures, shows that from a base of 100 in 1899, it had risen in the United States to 309 in 1939 and, of course, the figure has gone much higher since.

"The conviction is growing that developments connected with the use of electronics will have a profound effect upon engineering and business. The new machines because of their similarity to the human brain in their potential ability to fit into complicated controls, may be the beginning of a second industrial revolution."

The AFL pointed out that limitation of working hours was particularly important "with regard to the prospective development of underdeveloped areas where a reasonable limitation of working hours is advised in order to avoid the miseries of the early days of the industrial revolution in countries of early industrialization."

"The reasons for this request," said the statement prepared by Miss Toni Sender, AFL representative at UN, "are two-fold—workers should have their share in the increasing productivity of industry by reduction of working hours without wage cuts and sufficient purchasing power must be available for the increased production, if large-scale unemployment, is to be avoided."

SETS UP LOAN PLAN

Washington.—The Rural Electrification Administration announced that it is setting up machinery for handling loans "to persons now providing or who may hereafter provide telephone service in rural areas and to co-operative, non-profit, limited dividend or mutual associations." The loans were authorized under the rural telephone act passed by the 81st Congress with AFL support.

AFL TRANSIT UNION WANTS TO HELP PAY FOR ITS PENSIONS

By DAN SMYTH
Chicago Correspondent AFL News Service

CHICAGO.—Division 1381 of the AFL Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees would like to ask: Why all the hullabaloo for noncontributory pensions?

Division 1381, which represents 1,150 employees of the Chicago Motor Coach Co., has had a non-contributory pension plan for years, which it is trying to replace with a stronger, more liberal contributory pension plan.

The union has just negotiated a new contract with the bus company, providing for a wage increase of 10 cents an hour. It will bring 850 bus drivers to a wage of \$1.65 per hour.

The new contract also provides three weeks' vacation after 15 years' service, a guaranteed work-week for extra men, and other benefits, all obtained without a strike. But the issue of pensions was left open for further negotiation.

About eight years ago, the company agreed to pay a pension of \$30 a month to employees 65 years old or over, who have 20 years' service. Three years ago, the pension was raised to \$60. The company pays the entire cost. The workers contribute nothing out of their own wages.

The union doesn't want this. The union wants the same pension plan other locals of the same international have obtained from the Chicago Transit Authority, a municipally-owned traction firm which competes with the Motor Coach Co. for passengers.

The contributory plan would guarantee every pensioner at 65 a minimum of \$75 a month, not counting federal social security, and could be larger, depending upon average earnings and length of service.

The union proposes each employee pay 2 per cent of his wages into the pension fund the first year, to be matched by a 3 per cent contribution by the employer. In the second year, the contributions would go up to 2 per cent by the worker and 4 per cent by the employer; in the third year, 2 1-2 and 5 per cent. The plan would be reopened for revision every three years.

If no agreement is reached within 90 days on the pension issue, the contract provides it shall be submitted to arbitration.

"I don't know why anybody would want to strike for a non-contributory pension plan if a contributory plan is offered," said Robert Lamping, president of Division 1381. "We have had free pensions, and we would rather have the kind that workers help pay for."

"For one thing, it's permanent. Free pensions are something the employer can take away if there is a change in management or if anything happens to the union. And the union has nothing to say about its administration."

"A contributory pension, jointly administered, gives the worker a bigger voice, and it helps him to keep track of his rights. Then, when the pension comes due, it is a bigger one, because he has helped to pay for it."

GREEN GIVEN PLACE IN NEW WORLD UNION

(Continued From Page 1)
for assuring the defense of world democracy and the freedom of nations against any totalitarian aggression.

The executive committee, which will meet every 6 months, consists of:

North America—Mr. Green, Mr. Bengough, Mr. Murray and Pat Conroy of the Canadian Congress of Labor.

Europe—Leon Jouhaux of France; Eiler Jensen of Denmark; Paul Finet of Belgium; H. Bockler of Germany; and Giulio Pastore of Italy.

Latin America—Bernardo Ibanes of Chile, and Francisco Aguirre of Peru.

West Indies—R. Bradshaw.

Africa—Marcus Grant.

Asia and Middle East—E. Kato of Japan; Deven Sen of India, and K. Heydayat of Lebanon.

Britain—Arthur Deakin and Vincent Tewson.

New Orleans.—AFL leaders of 14 southern states led off the 1950 Samuel Gompers Memorial organizing drive for 1,000,000 new members with an enthusiastic hard-working planning conference that aimed to gain 500,000 of the total.

Harry O'Reilly, AFL director of organizing, said that the rally was an auspicious start for the drive authorized by the 68th AFL convention and gave the campaign a tremendous momentum.

"If the enthusiasm shown carries down to the rank and file and spreads to other sections of the country, we've every reason to believe that we will reach our campaign goal," Mr. O'Reilly said. "The demonstration argues for successful membership gains."

The state and central labor union representatives set up plans to see that every wage-earner in the South is given a chance to join the AFL union of his choice. The canvass will be conducted section-by-section in every state in industry, agriculture and white collar fields.

"We received reports," Mr. O'Reilly said, "from every section of the South that in every locality union and non-union wage earners are awakening not only economically but to their rightful place in the civic, social and political life of their communities."

Participating with Mr. O'Reilly, were J. L. Rhodes, southern director of Labor's League for Political Education, and others.

75-Cent Wage Paid Ahead of Schedule

New York.—Some employers have already increased wages to the 75-cent an hour minimum which will be required for all employees covered by the wage and hour law after January 25. This was reported by Arthur J. White, regional director of the Wage and Hour Public Contracts Division, U. S. Department of Labor.

The amended law boosts the minimum rate from 40 to 75 cents an hour beginning at 12:01 a. m. on January 25, 1950, but field investigations made in New York and New Jersey reveal that many employers adjusted to the higher rate shortly after the new amendments were signed by President Truman on October 26.

Mr. White's report shows that a total of 95 employers in New York State agreed to pay back wages in the amount of \$31,870 to 443 employees as a result of investigations made under wage and hour laws during November.

These payments were restitutions for failure to comply with overtime provisions of the wage and hour law, which apply to employees engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods for interstate commerce, and the Public Contracts Act, which applies to government contracts for more than \$10,000.

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