

YEAR'S NEWS BRIEFS

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empted from coverage by the law. Former NLRB General Counsel Robert Denham advised Congress to pass a tougher labor law and get rid of the board because he said it was biased in favor of labor.

Eisenhower ended all wage and salary controls, making it possible for 9250 petitions not yet acted upon by the WSC to be put into effect immediately. The President also said price controls would not be renewed April 30 and many would be ended before then. He asked for no standby control power.

For the first time in history, the International Association of Machinists re-elected without opposition all its top officers, including President Al Hayes and Secretary-Treasurer Eric Peterson.

Teamsters' President Dave Beck and the trucking industry asked Eisenhower to set up a Federal Transport Commission to take the industry out of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which Beck charged was "railroad dominated." The Teamsters also launched an organizing drive among 100,000 taxi drivers across the nation in a campaign to win 500,000 new members.

CIO Textile Workers rejected pay cuts demanded by big woolen mills and the AFL Textile Workers asked Eisenhower to fulfill his promise to do something about textile unemployment. Seventy textile firms, mostly in the south, brought court action to block the \$1 an hour wage minimum set by former Labor Secretary Tolson before leaving office in January.

The court directed that the new minimum not be put into effect until further hearings had been held. Senator Green (D. R.I.), introduced a bill calling for repeal of the Fullbright Amendment which had made the court action possible.

The notoriously anti-union Kohler Co. of Sheboygan, Wis., signed a contract with the CIO Auto Workers just in time to head off a strike approved by 92 per cent of its 3600 workers. The contract wiped out many long-standing inequities in wages and working conditions.

Labor also mourned the passing of Charles W. Ervin, 87, public relations advisor of the CIO Clothing Workers who had been in the forefront of labor and liberal causes since 1906. The union opened negotiations for a 15-cent an hour wage boost and other benefits.

MARCH: With both House and Senate Labor committees considering revision of Taft-Hartley, AFL President Meany led off the parade of union witnesses by asking for 23 changes to make the law "just and fair." CIO President Reuther, declaring that "sugar-coating won't do," called for seven basic changes in fundamental parts of the law. IAM President Hayes came out for compulsory arbitration of "real" national emergency strikes. Among other union witnesses were representatives of the CIO Rubber, Textile, Clothing and Communications unions and the AFL Typographical Union.

Industry witnesses for the Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers either demanded the law be made even tougher, or said the law was all right as it stood, but attacked NLRB as "biased" in favor of labor. Chances for T-H revision seemed slim after President Eisenhower said the administration would make no recommendations. The Labor Department's industry-labor-public advisory committee on T-H revision collapsed when industry members refused to vote either yes or no on changes in the law.

March also brought a barrage of anti-labor decisions from the U. S. Supreme Court. The 80-day T-H injunction was upheld in the Steelworkers strike against American Locomotive and the court ruled that an employe covered by a contract containing a no-strike clause may not refuse to cross a picket line on his working time. It also ruled that even peaceful picketing may be banned in states having so-called "right to work" laws. It did uphold the ITU and Musicians on the issue of "bogus" type-setting and standby hands.

The UAW-CIO convention set as its next goal the guaranteed annual wage and strengthened the constitutional provisions for ridding locals of Communist leadership. David McDonald, just installed as Steelworkers' head, pledged his union to support UAW in the wage drive and ridiculed rumors that Steel would split with the CIO.

The big business character of the new administration became even more apparent when Albert M. Cole, long a foe of public housing, was approved by the Senate as head of the Federal Housing and Home Financing Agency. The administration also surrendered to the American Medical Association's demand that it have a special assistant in the re-organized Federal Security Agency. Edward F. Howrey, lawyer who for many years had defended big companies against charges of violating anti-trust laws, was named chairman of the Federal Trade Commission which polices those laws. The Senate and House Interior committees okayed the off-shore oil grab for the states and a representative of the Chamber of Commerce got an extremely sympathetic hearing from a Senate Judiciary subcommittee when he attacked the International Labor Organization, which has worked for more than 30 years to raise living standards of the world's working people.

CIO Clothing Workers won a 12 1/2-cent raise for 150,000 workers in the men's clothing industry and a strike of CIO Rubber Workers was called off after Goodyear signed a contract providing 25 basic improvements for 30,000 employes in 10 plants. CIO Electrical Workers were in negotiations with General Electric and the Communications Workers opened 1953 contract talks with Bell Telephone.

A government-appointed arbitrator approved a 4-cent productivity wage boost for 1,300,000 rail workers. Union leaders expressed disappointment at the size of the boost, but hailed the establishment of the productivity precedent for the rail industry. This rail union's drive for the union shop reached the 84 per cent mark as Union Pacific signed for 60,000 workers.

Both AFL and CIO urged the strengthening and extension of rent controls after the April 30 expiration date, and backed broad standby controls legislation for national emergencies.

APRIL: The AFL and CIO unity committee, meeting in Washington acted to remove obstacles in the way of merger by appointing a subcommittee to study problems of jurisdiction and raiding. Top officers of both CIO and AFL were on the subcommittee.

Warnings continued to pile up of cutbacks in the social gains of the 20 years under Democratic Administrations. The House voted to kill public housing, to virtually wreck public power, to end rent controls earlier than asked by the Administration and to give to coastal states the billions of dollars in revenue from offshore oil and mineral deposits which labor and liberal groups had urged be earmarked for aiding education in all 48 states.

The picture on housing and social security was particularly gloomy; Welfare Secretary Hobby and Housing Commissioner Cole joined the government's new study-and-do-nothing program, killing any immediate action on public housing and social security extension. Mrs. Hobby said her study would cover the Chamber of Commerce social security plan which organized labor had denounced as a scheme to loot the social security fund and steal the retirement benefits of workers who had paid into it. Labor also denounced two bills aimed at punching big holes in the federal-state unemployment compensation system. Mrs. Hobby hired as her legal advisor Parke M. Banta, who voted in the 80th Congress to strip social security coverage from thousands. On the Taft-Hartley front, CIO and AFL leaders continued to testify before both House and Senate Labor Committees on recommended charges to make the law more just to workers, and industry leaders continued to demand even stronger curbs on labor. Sen. Humphrey predicted that any Taft-Hartley changes were likely to be for the worse because of the "pro-management, anti-labor" atmosphere brought to Washington by the GOP.

The CIO executive board named John Riffe to succeed Hayward as executive vice-president and director of organization. It also announced establishment of a \$1,000,000 Philip Murray Memorial Foundation in honor of the late CIO president and set up a \$25,000 CIO Free World Labor Fund, to be enlarged by contributions from affiliated unions.

Senator McCarthy, scheduled to appear with Senator Morse on the AFL television program "Both Sides" to debate on Congressional investigations, backed out.

ILGWU opened a pay boost drive for 125,000 members in New York and made plans to extend the drive to all its 400,000 members. The AFL Hotel Workers convention voted to back the labor unity

movement and launched a campaign to inform the public about reactionary groups seeking to wreck the United Nations. The Machinists and six airlines opened the first industry-wide negotiations in commercial aviation. David Belmuck, founder and first president of the AFL Airline Pilots, died.

Eighteen cents in cost-of-living pay increases were incorporated in the base pay in a contract signed by IUE-CIO covering 12,000 workers at Sperry Gyroscope, New York. Largest company-financed medical insurance plan in any CIO contract was won by 35,000 CIO Rubber Workers after a two-day strike at 18 US Rubber plants. Pay boost and job upgradings were won in the Ohio Bell Telephone contract, first signed by the CIO Communications Workers in 1952.

The CIO and Mexican Confederation of Labor formed a joint company boost, guaranteed annual wage and pension and insurance improvements.

Denouncing Wall Street for its peace fears, Reuther urged Eisenhower to call a conference to plan for full production and full employment in peacetime. Meany called for preparation for peace by maintenance of high employment at high wages. The 1952 social justice awards of the National Religion and Labor Foundation were awarded posthumously to Green and Murray.

Edward Keating retired after 33 years as editor-manager of Labor, weekly newspaper of the rail brotherhood, and was succeeded by Ruben Levin. Ben Fischer of the Steelworkers was named CIO Housing Director.

The CIO and Mexican Confederation of Labor formed a joint committee to deal with mutual problems arising from the "woback" invasion and exploitation of Mexicans by US business firms in Mexico.

MAY: The real shape of the Republicans' great "moral crusade" began to become apparent in May and the picture was anything but pleasant for working people. While Eisenhower continued to stall on his promised recommendations for improving Taft-Hartley, the staff of the Senate Labor Committee came out with a series of proposals for making the law even tougher on labor.

The House approved severe cuts in the budgets for the Labor and Health, Education and Welfare Departments, and the Welfare and Agriculture Departments agreed to suspend the inspection program through which the public was protected from contaminated grain. Eisenhower approved the first of the schemes to give away public resources by signing a bill giving coastal states title to oil and mineral-rich submerged lands out to their historic boundaries. The stage for the second give-away was set when Interior Secretary McKay okayed development of Hells Canyon dam in the Northwest by private utilities rather than the federal government. And the cost of financing a home went up a big notch when the Federal Housing and Veterans Administration yielded to pressure and booted interest rates on home loans.

All these actions were taken over the protests of labor officials who urged that preparations be started immediately for the 1954 elections to get a Congress responsive to the people's needs.

AFL President George Meany told the Ladies' Garment Workers convention that "plain facts" seem to indicate there will be no effective Congressional leadership from Eisenhower. Hatters' President Alex Rose charged the Administration was looking for a depression to create a cheap labor market and beat back labor unions. CIO Secretary-Treasurer Carey declared that Eisenhower was replacing the Truman Fair Deal and Roosevelt New Deal with a "stacked deal"—stacked against the little man and in favor of big business.

The AFL Executive Council at its quarterly meeting in Washington urged the Administration to begin planning now for full employment and a prosperous economy in peace-time, called for a better housing program, rejected the International Longshoremen's "cleanup" report and authorized the setting-up of an AFL-CIO no-raiding pact.

The CIO Steelworkers, opening negotiations, were told by Big Steel which had just boosted prices, that any wage boost would be "inflationary." General Motors, Ford and Chrysler agreed to substantial revision of their five-year contracts with CIO Auto Workers which run until 1955. The annual productivity increase was boosted from 4 to 5 cents an hour, 19 cents of previous cost-of-living raises were written into the base pay, skilled workers were given an additional 10 cents an hour and pensions were boosted to \$177.50 a month including social security.

Both the AFL and CIO revamped their organizing machinery, the AFL setting up 14 regions in the US and one in Canada and the CIO reshuffling its organizing staff to free most of its desk men for field work. Top officials of the AFL and CIO began drafting a no-raiding pact. Dr. Nathan Feinsinger replaced Dr. George Taylor as CIO jurisdictional disputes arbiter.

An arbitrator refused to grant the 31-cent an hour pay cut asked by the American Woolen Company for 16,000 CIO Textile Workers. An arbitrator's award also gave the AFL Garment Workers \$3 to \$5 a week increases for 60,000 in the women's coat and suit industry and the union's convention voted to set substantial pay boosts and extension of the 35-hour week as its next contract goals. Wage boosts of 10 to 12 1/2 cents an hour and fringe benefits were won by the CIO Clothing Workers for 375,000 members.

The CIO Communications workers won raises for 17,000 Western Electric workers and 16,000 Michigan Bell Workers. The 7500-member Milwaukee local of the CIO Brewery Workers struck against all six of the city's big breweries to win a 35-hour week and 25-cent an hour pay boost.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Former President Truman were among 12 notables named to a public advisory board for the million dollar Philip Murray Memorial Foundation. The AFL also planned a \$1 million memorial to William Green. A public school in Los Angeles was named in honor of Green and the 500-unit Philip Murray Homes project was dedicated in Chicago.

JUNE: Top AFL and CIO officials reached agreement on a 2-year no-raiding pact, to go into effect January 1 after approval by both conventions, as a first step toward merger of the two organizations. UAW-CIO and IAM-AFL also renewed their no-raiding agreement and extended the pact to include close cooperation in bargaining and a hands-off policy for one union when the other already has 50 per cent of a company organized. Newspaper reports of pending mergers of three CIO unions with three AFL unions were denied by CIO officials who said talks between the unions were on no-raiding pacts in line with CIO and AFL policy. Spokesmen for McDonald and Lewis also denied reports that the Steelworkers and UMW were talking merger.

The Administration continued to blow hot and cold on Taft-Hartley. A charge by Meany that GOP leaders in Congress were trying to repudiate Eisenhower's promises on T-H brought an immediate denial from Chairman Smith of the Senate Labor committee, who said he would work for T-H amendments as soon as possible. Eisenhower also held a news conference that he expected to fulfill his pledges to labor but two days later, after a White House conference, Smith and Chairman McConnell of the House Labor committee announced that T-H changes were out for this session of Congress.

AFL, CIO and UMW delegates to the ICFTU Congress issued a joint statement questioning the sincerity of Soviet peace moves and condemning violations of human rights in Argentina, Spain, Tunisia and South Africa, as well as Russia and her satellites. A UN-ILA report substantiated charges of widespread slave labor in Communist countries. The report was issued as workers in East Germany rebelled against Russian rule. George Delaney of the AFL, US worker delegate to the ILO conference in Geneva, refuted US employer attacks on the ILO. First gift made by the Philip Murray Memorial Foundation was \$15,000 to the American Association for the United Nations.

The Steelworkers won an 8 1/2-cent an hour pay boost for 1,250,000 members and wiped out the north-south pay differential. Seven major improvements were included in an agreement ending an 8-week strike of 7000 IUE members at General Electric's Syracuse plant. Shortly after, GE agreed to a pay boost for 74,000 IUE members in all its plants. Both the CIO Maritime and Shipbuilding unions won pay boosts. NMU after a 4-day strike.

Formal merger of the AFL Boilermakers and Blacksmiths was voted at a joint convention of the two unions which had made a tentative merger agreement in 1950. CIO granted its first new charter since 1951 to the Insurance Workers Union. James P. Shields, grand chief of the Locomotive Engineers since 1938, died a week before the union's convention.

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