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FREE

EDITORIAL

A Warning to the A. F. of L.

The recently publicized proposal of Walter Jones, A. F. of L. Legislative Representative, that the Panama Canal dislodge some 15,000 non-citizen employees from their Canal Zone quarters, deprive them of Clubhouse and Commissary privileges and remove their children from Panama Canal schools is the most unconscionable, sordid and avaricious move yet on the part of this heartless outfit.

This vulgar demand of the A.F. of L. has shocked the senses of every right-thinking and self-respecting person on the Isthmus. It goes beyond even its past record of unbelievable hypocrisy and cant.

A most interesting facet of the event is the reign of silence in the press. Where are the voices who would cry out at this shameless maneuver of the A.F. of L.—the people wring their hands and shed their tears over the injustices endured by the "silver" employees and who deplore their affiliation to UPW-CIO? We need not answer this question. It has been answered in the minds of our members as it has a hundred times in the past.

In addition to its viciousness, the Jones declaration contains a number of wilful and pernicious misstatements. The proposal is offered as an economy move so that prices for the harried and oppressed "gold" employees can be reduced. Jones wails that "Silver" commissaries and clubhouses "sell at a much cheaper rate on account of the low rate of pay in this group, and any loss incurred is covered by higher prices in the activities for United States citizens."

We defy Jones to purchase a single article in a "silver" commissary at a lower price than in a "gold" store. That food prices are lower in "silver" clubhouses is nothing but an unexploded myth. A customer can obtain a dinner in a "gold" Clubhouse for 65¢ that he will be forced to buy for 95¢ or more in a "silver" clubhouse without service, condiments, or the attractive surroundings that he is ordinarily accustomed to.

Jones is either woefully misinformed, or blindly ignorant about Canal Zone conditions. Does he think that the fancy swimming pools and bowling alleys in "gold" communities pay for themselves? If he doesn't know, we'll inform him (and Congress too if the occasion arises) that the Clubhouse Division loses thousands of dollars on these joy-riding facilities each year. And how are these thousands of dollars made up? The Clubhouse Division is forced to charge higher prices for the merchandise and food it sells and which is bought from the hard-earned salaries of the non-citizen employees.

If the "silver" employees were deprived of clubhouse privileges, Jones and his clique would either have to give up their swimming pools and bowling alleys or else pay such increased rates that they'd be howling to Congress for relief. We also wonder how long Jones would enjoy his superior commissary services without the fat profits made each year from the "silver" stores.

In a piece of unrivalled hypocrisy, the A. F. of L. talks out of one side of its mouth of saving the United States government several million dollars, and from the other side it presses for the passage of the McGarran Amendment which would cost the U. S. government over \$36,000,000 per year.

The demand that 15,000 non-citizen employees be evicted from their quarters and thrown into Panama is so depraved that it is difficult, if not impossible, to deal rationally with it. The housing shortage in Panama is so acute that whole families of six-eight, and ten people are crowded into single rooms. The victims of the Rio Abajo disaster are still holed up with families and relatives unable to find apartments or rooms for themselves.

The advocacy of the wholesale expulsion of thousands of employees and their families into such conditions can only cause feelings of loathing, disgust, and revulsion.

Not only is the A.F. of L. demand an example of unregenerate avarice but it is almost incredible in its blind stupidity. If the proposal were carried out, the "gold" employees would be the serious losers.

How many "gold" employees would lose their jobs if the "silver" clubhouses and commissaries were shut down? How many plumbers, electricians, foremen, supervisors, etc., would be thrown out of work if there were no longer any servicing or repairs to be done on "silver" housing. How many "gold" teachers, supervisors, principals, clerks, etc., would be sent back to the States if the schools were shut down?

This is but another dramatic example of a selfish group bent upon injuring others which would end up in inflicting grievous harm upon itself.

The demand of Jones should not be read as merely another wild mouthing from a reckless spokesman. This proposal represents the official thinking of both the Metal Trades Council

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Supreme Court declares Canal Wage Policy Against Congressional Intent

FEDERAL WAGE-HOUR LAW APPLICABLE TO CANAL ZONE

In a decision on the Vermilya-Brown Lumber Co. vs. Connel case handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court on December 6, 1948, the Court indicated that the "Caribbean Wage Scale" policy of the Panama Canal in determining the wage level of non-citizen employees is against the intent of the United States Congress.

IMPRESIVE SHOW OF STRENGTH



Partial view of the approximate 5000 Union members and their families participating in the Labor Day Parade on the Atlantic side.

Best Letter to be Published

In the past ACCION has maintained a policy of not publishing letters written by members to the paper. This has been necessary because of limited space.

This policy has been changed to permit at least a minimum of rank and file expression in the newspaper. Readers are now invited to write letters to ACCION on any subject of current interest. The editorial staff will select what it considers the one or two best written letters and publish them.

Address all letters to ACCION, Drawer R. Balboa, Canal Zone.

La Boca Overcome by Acrid Fumes

Several times in the past year La Boca residents have complained of the fumes and smoke resulting from the burning of waste material by employees of the Panama Railroad in an area close to the Mechanical Division.

The fumes are of a very offensive character, causing eyes to smart and burn, resulting in coughing and generally causing acute discomfort. The wind usually blows the fumes directly into La Boca.

On several occasions, the smoldering continued throughout the night and

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Convention Time Approaching

The Fourth Annual Convention of Local 713, UPW-CIO is scheduled to take place on November 19 and 20 at the La Boca Clubhouse.

Steward elections have been in progress since last month and will be completed within the next ten days.

All chapters will conduct their elections during this month and submit the names of officers and delegates to the convention to the Recording and Corresponding Secretary as soon as possible.

The Chapters are urged to take action this month

Thousands In Back Pay

The case arose several years ago when employees of private contractors sued for back and overtime pay under the Wage-Hour law. The Wage-Hour act establishes a 40 cents hourly minimum wage and provides time-and-a-half pay for overtime work in excess of 40 hours per week. These employees were receiving less than 40 cents per hour and were paid straight time rates over 40 hours. The employees won thousands of dollars in back pay as a result of the Supreme Court decision.

Dislocation Argued

In its arguments before the Supreme Court the State Department and Department of Justice argued that if the law were made applicable to these areas, the local economies would be dislocated by the higher wage level required. This is the same argument advanced by the Panama Canal administration in its maintenance of the "Caribbean Wage Scale". The argument runs that if a higher level of wages is established the economy of the Republic of Panama would be disturbed and consequently would be against the interests of that country.

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on any resolutions to the convention and proposed amendments to the constitution.

Thousands Join Spirited Labor Day Demonstrations

Labor Day, September 5, marked another important victory for Local 713 when it successfully staged parades on both sides of the Isthmus in an impressive show of strength.

To the martial strains of the Community and Centro-Isthmian Bands, the Pacific side parade wended its out of the DeLesseps Park at 9 A.M. and proceeded along Central Avenue through "J" Street and over into the Canal Zone, along Ancon and Balboa, and ended at the La Boca Ball Park. A snappy Labor Day program was held. Spirited address and musical items were rendered by Union members.

Addresses were delivered by President Pascual Ampudia, Financial Secretary-Treasurer Cecil Hall, Parade Chairman Lester Pringle, recently departed for the United States; Edith Harper, Jose C. Tuñon and Francisco Arauz, first President of Local 713.

PARADES COLORFUL: Ap-

proximately 3000 members and their families participated in the Pacific side demonstration despite a 100 degrees heat that seemed to be responsible for keeping away hundreds of other members.

Colorful posters, banners and slogans carried by the

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