

THE LABORER

Year I — No. 10

Panama, August 9, 1945

5¢ a copy

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

We have for sometime now been receiving from the American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C., their Weekly News Service. These pamphlets were, up to three weeks ago, printed in the Spanish language only, and in order to give our English Readers the benefit of the articles in the "Service," our Secretary, some two weeks ago, communicated with the Secretary-Treasurer of the A.F.L., requesting that we be supplied these Weekly News Service in the English language as well. We take pleasure in announcing that his (our Secretary's) request has been complied with. The Union's thanks to him for his efforts in this direction.

While the articles covered in the referred to "Service" are, in the major degree, not applicable to us here on the Isthmus of Panama at the present time, nevertheless, none of us can prophesy of the future, therefore, it has been decided by the Management of the "Laborer" to bring to the attention of its readers, especially members of the union, from time to time extracts and or entire article (s) of the said Weekly News Service for their information, etc., and we quote the following from they Weekly of June 26, 1945:

"A.F.L. President William Green called upon all affiliated unions and AFL members to fight against radical and religious bigotry and discrimination.

ious bigotry and discrimination.

"In an article in the July issue of the American Federationist, Mr. Green declared it imperative that the mandate of the last convention for the establishment of 'industrial equality' be carried out. He added:

"We must not falter or fail. We must fight to maintain and preserve American principles and the American way of life. The faces of all working men and women must be turned everlastingly against radical and religious discrimination and in favor of freedom, liberty, equality and democracy.

"Emphasizing the importance of organized labor's stake in the elimination of intolerance, Mr. Green declared:

"When and if organized labor predicates membership in any union upon race, religion or ancestry, it is helping to create a potential anti-labor army that can be used by labor-baiters to fight labor unions, weaken labor's collective bargaining power and destroy its effectiveness."

"Another danger from discrimination was cited by Mr. Green. He said:

'Freedom is essential to the preservation of democracy. When we begin to limit it by insisting that it be denied to some because of racial or religious differences, the list of ex-

Continued on Page Two

Liberalized Jobless Benefits Provided In Long-Delayed Doughton Measure

Washington, D. C. — After long and unexplained delays, Chairman Robert L. Doughton of the House Ways and Means Committee finally introduced "by request" the Administration's bill to liberalize unemployment compensation benefits during the reconversion period.

A similar measure is expected to be placed before the Senate soon by Senator Kilgore of West Virginia.

Six weeks ago, President Truman sent a special message to Congress calling for rush action to meet the emergency caused by cutbacks and increasing unemployment, but the law-makers have stalled almost to the point of their recess for the summer.

Rep. Doughton said his committee will decide whether to give prior consideration to the unemployment compensation bill or to another measure designed to increase old age benefits. In any event, he held out little hope for action before Congress comes back in September.

In contrast to the lack of enthusiasm displayed by Congressional leaders toward Pres-

ident Truman's demand for meeting human needs during reconversion was the speed with which they have rushed passage of legislation giving corporations tax refunds to solve the reconversion headaches of big business.

The Doughton bill provides for the federal government to supplement the madequate unemployment benefits now paid under state laws through agreements with the states. The agreements would underwrite the following nationwide standards:

1—Increasing maximum unemployment benefits for diemployed workers to an upper limit of \$25 a week. At present only a few states pay as much as \$15 a week.

2—Increasing the duration of such benefits to as many as 26 weeks in any one year. In some states benefits are now permitted for only six or eight weeks.

3—Granting to federal government and maritime employees the same rights to unemployment benefits as are accorded to other workers. At present such employees are not covered by state laws.

Radio Labor Editor On Air Twelve Years

Washington, D. C.—The oldest labor radio program in America, conducted by Albert N. Dennis, begins its twelfth consecutive year and marks its 573d weekly broadcast over Station WTOP in the nation's capital on July 15. During his long service, Mr. Dennis has interviewed many high ranking labor leaders and has sought to present labor's constructive achievements to the public.

Truman Cuts Hours Of Federal Employees

Washington, D. C.—President Truman directed that the hours of federal employees in all but six agencies be reduced from 48 to 44 weekly. The exempted agencies were old to cut hours at the earliest possible date.

Employees who go on a 44-hour week will lose four hours of overtime, but they will paid more than they received for a 48-hour week, thanks to a wage boost approved by Congress and signed by the President.

Ranking Getting Ranker

Washington, D. C.—Politaxer John Rankin, chairman of the House Veterans Committee, ignored the objections of Veterans Administrator Frank Hines and hoodwinked the members of his own committee when he reported favorably on his own bill giving veterans a "free ride" in union plants.

Minority members of the House Committee charged that Rep. Rankin had skipped public hearings on the bill which has been widely denounced as an attempt to pit veterans against union workers and place them in the false position of strikebreakers.

On its face, the bill exempts war veterans from joining a union, paying initiation fees or dues even if the plant they seek employment in is operating under closed shop contracts.

Rankin ignored the fact that most unions already have voluntarily waived initiation fees for ex-servicemen.

Commenting on the bill editorially, the Washington Post, a conservative newspaper, said:

"Rep. John Rankin has a scheme for union-busting which he fancies will appeal to American servicemen. Our own guess is that they will readily see through it as a plain piece of demagoguery.

"Mr. Rankin, as a matter of fact, let the cat out of the bag and disclosed his real purpose when he said that his bill would allow veterans to take jobs vacated by strikers. What we need is not a means of fomenting industrial disputes but means of adjusting them in a friendly spirit."

Labor's Great Decade Of Progress Highlights NLRB's Annual Report

Washington, D. C. — Organized labor's great progress during the past decade was spotlighted by the National Labor Relation Board in a report made public on its tenth anniversary.

On that day, too, Chairman Harry A. Millis retired and Paul M. Herzog, former head of the New York State Labor Relations Board, took over the reins. He was appointed by President Truman several weeks ago, after Millis resigned.

The board's summary showed that in the decade it has handled 74,000 cases, involving both unfair labor practices by employers and requests for elections.

Over 2,000 "company unions" were ousted in that time. Three hundred thousand workers, who were fired for union activities or discharged be-

cause of strikes, were ordered reinstated, and 30,000 of them who lost pay while out received \$9,000,000 in back wages.

More than 24,000 NLRB elections were held, and 6,000,000 workers went to the polls, 85 per cent those eligible—a for greater proportion than the number of voters who participate in elections for government offices.

In over 20,000 of the elections, unions won out, thus proving beyond a shadow of doubt that the vast majority of workers want union protection.

Meanwhile the board cited an alarming current development—a 15 per cent upturn in the number of cases charging unfair labor practices by employers. This appears to indicate, NLRB spokesmen said, that some employers, at least, are once again embarked on "union-busting" campaigns.

Hopkins Named Impartial Arbiter Of Ladies' Garment Industries

New York City.—Harry L. Hopkins has accepted the post of Impartial Chairman of the New York Women's Coat and Suit Industry, David Dubinsky, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, announced.

As Impartial Chairman, Mr. Hopkins will preside over collective agreements embracing 50,000 employees and 1,300 employers with an annual production output valued at \$500,000,000, comprising eighty per cent of the coat and suit output for the nation as a whole.

The collective agreements in the coat and suit industry were formed back in 1910 when, in an effort to avert future strife, following a long and bitter strike, machinery for the settlement of labor-management differences was established under a "protocol of peace", in the preparation of which the late Justice Brandeis had a primary part. In 1924, during a study of industrial relationship in the trade conducted by a Commission appointed by the then Governor Smith and headed by Herbert H. Lehman, the post

of permanent Impartial Chairman was created, with Raymond V. Ingersoll, long a constructive figure in public affairs, as the first incumbent. Mr. Ingersoll served for seven years. He was succeeded by George W. Alger, who was followed after 5 years by Col. Sol C. Rosenblatt. Former Mayor James J. Walker was named to the post in 1940 and occupied it until June 30.

Mr. Dubinsky expressed keen gratification over Mr. Hopkins' acceptance of the post in a joint statement representing all parties in the industry. He said:

"It is a source of utmost satisfaction to us that Mr. Hopkins has acceded to our earnest request that he accept the impartial chairmanship of the New York Coat and Suit Industry. His vast experience and broad vision will have a great constructive meaning to all factors in our industry.

"He will unquestionably be a labor-employer dealing in which our industry has enacted the industry's tradition of progress in sound and equitable a pioneer's role."

Postal Workers Get Good Pay Boost, Their First In Twenty-Five Years

Washington, D. C. — Postal workers got their first basic pay increase since 1925 when President Truman signed a law granting them a 20 percent wage boost plus true time-and-a-half for overtime.

The bulk of employees in the lower grades will receive a 20 percent hike or \$400 a year,

whichever is less. For regular employees in the so-called automatic grades, the increase may not be less than \$300, even if that amounts to more than a 20 percent increase.

The Post Office Department said that 370,000 employees would share in the increases.

Continued on Page Two