

LABOR LEADERS KEEP HANDS OFF IN WPA DISPUTE

Hear Scores of Appeals
But Cannot Figure
Out Way to Win.

By LUDWELL DENNY
Times Special Writer

WASHINGTON, July 7.—National labor organizations are finding the widespread 130-hour-a-month "strike" of WPA skilled workers almost too hot to handle.

The A. F. of L. Building Trades department has received scores of appeals from local unions and building trades councils, but is taking a hands-off attitude. Though A. F. of L. department officials will confer with Administrator Harrington of WPA here today regarding the situation, they are declining to advise the unions whether their members should stay out or go back to work.

Even the separate international unions of the building trades are trying to sidestep the issue and leave it in the laps of the locals. Although the international unions have power to intervene, the local bodies have full authority to act on their own pending such intervention.

See No Chance to Win

The C. I. O. also is keeping hands off, on the theory that it is an A. F. of L. building trades show. The militant Workers Alliance, a union of WPA workers, is concentrating on its Congressional drive for remedial action, and leaving the strike issue pretty much in the hands of its locals in New York City and elsewhere.

The reason A. F. of L. and C. I. O. national officers are trying to duck responsibility is that they see no way at the moment of winning such strikes.

Most of them favor the old "prevailing wage rate" system under which artisans put in from 50 to 80 hours, and object to the new provision requiring 130 hours work a month for approximately the same pay, but they recognize that Col. Harrington cannot change the law.

Harrington Is Firm

Even if he now regretted his recommendation to Congress to require 130 hours a month work—and there is no sign that he does regret it—he has no legal power to restore the old system as demanded by the "strikers."

Col. Harrington's attitude is that the law will be enforced, and that persons absenting themselves from the job more than five days will automatically sever their WPA connections—at least temporarily. Yesterday he sent to his state administrators a third order to make this clear to the relief workers.

Projects Employing 150,000 Threatened

WASHINGTON, July 7—(U. P.)—Strikes protesting reduction of wage rates under the 1940 work relief bill threatened today to stop work on WPA construction projects employing an estimated 150,000 men.

Thousands were idle as a result of organized labor opposition to the provision of the \$1,755,600,000 relief bill substituting a semi-pay scale for the prevailing wage formerly paid skilled workers. More workers were scheduled to strike today.

Under the security wage system, which became effective Wednesday, skilled laborers are required to work approximately 130 hours a month for the same pay they formerly received for as little as 50 hours.

A. F. of L. building trades unions protested today to WPA Administration F. C. Harrington against the new security wage clause in the 1940 relief bill.

Union leaders, fearing that abandonment of the prevailing wage would cause private employers to reduce their pay scales, called protest walkouts in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and in smaller communities. Some of the walkouts were spontaneous protests of WPA workers themselves.

Chairman Clifton A. Woodrum (D. Va.), of the House Committee which drafted the relief bill, said "there's not the slightest chance" of Congress restoring the prevailing wage system to meet the strikers' demands.

The strike spread despite a warning by Mr. Harrington that strikers would be dropped from the rolls if they do not return to work within five days. Major strikes were reported from Milwaukee, New York, Cleveland, Chicago, Rochester, N. Y., and Keywest, Fla.

Innocent?



WEEKLY PRESS PLANS PARLEY FOR JULY 14-15

Speakers Announced for
State Convention at
Maxinkuckee Inn.

Times Special
CULVER, Ind., July 7.—The Indiana Weekly Press Association is to hold its annual summer convention at Maxinkuckee Inn here July 14-15.

Following a three-hour registration period beginning at 9 a. m. on July 14 and a luncheon, Charles M. Finch of the Walkerton Independent, association president, will greet the delegates.

Afternoon Speakers Listed

Other afternoon speakers are to include H. W. Thompson of the Versailles Republican, "What of the Future of the Weekly Newspaper?"; Ned Gorrell of the Winamac Democrat, "The Weekly Newspaper and Its Editorial Column"; Herbert Harris of the Greenwood News, "Weekly Newspapers and Politics"; James K. Danglade of the Vevay Enterprise, "Free Publicity Menace" and Tom R. Johnston of the Purdue University news bureau, "Indiana Agriculture and the Weekly Press."

Way E. Fleming, Hoosier State Press Association manager, is to speak on "Tomorrow—Where Are We?" at the 6:30 p. m. dinner following an hour's tour of the Culver Military Academy campus and a boat trip on Lake Maxinkuckee.

Film Scheduled

Saturday morning speakers are to include Arden Rearick of the Winamac Republican, "Weekly Newspapers and Community Service"; Burdette Slater of the Westville Indicator, "Competition Between Daily and Weekly Newspapers"; R. L. Robinson of the Paoli News, "How to Maintain a Paid-up Subscription List?" and Walter Crim, who will give a report on the NEA convention.

The Mergenthaler Linotype Co. will show a "vocalfilm" on "Newspaper Make-up." After the luncheon and an open forum, the annual meeting of the Board of Directors will close the sessions.

WILLIAM LEWIS, 73, FOUND DEAD IN HOME

William Lewis, a 73-year-old laborer, was found dead at his home, 2828 Clifton St., today. Dr. Hugh K. Thatcher said he died of heart disease. Mr. Lewis had lived here since 1918, coming from Lebanon. He is survived by a son, Norval W. Lewis of 1605 N. Alabama St. and a grandson, James W. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Board of the Christian Church.

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