

Braceros Not Needed

The AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee is proving that there is a plentiful supply of competent domestic farm workers to harvest California crops without importing braceros from Mexico.

With California's peach and pear harvests in full swing, braceros are being pulled out of the orchards to make room for domestic workers who have reentered the farm labor force under the improved conditions brought about by the AFL-CIO organizing drive.

"We've driven wages up," AWOC Director Norman Smith points out, "and we've shown the grower that he can get plenty of domestic workers if he'll pay decent wages."

The employment figures tell the story:

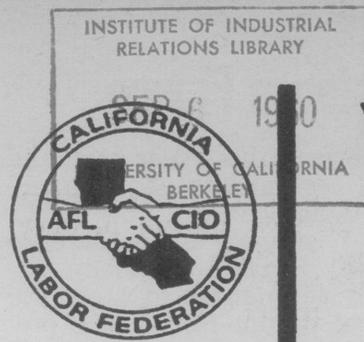
At this time last year in the cling peach harvest over 12,000 braceros were employed. This year, there are approximately 250.

In the pear harvest in the Sacramento river region, a similar situation exists. Contrary to previous years when the harvest was picked almost entirely by braceros, last week, there were some 3,000 domestics at work, and only about 30 Mexican Nationals.

Both the peach and pear harvests are proceeding at piece rates assuring workers a minimum of \$1.25 per hour demanded by AWOC. In case after case, workers and growers have been able to reach understandings on what the minimum shall be. Work stoppages are being held to a minimum.

AWOC reports some 12 strikes in

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THOS. L. PITTS
Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

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AFL-CIO Endorses Kennedy-Johnson Ticket

Based on the "sharp and clear" contrast between the platforms, records and candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties, the AFL-CIO's General Board last week strongly endorsed and called for the election of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson as "in the best interests of the United States and of the labor movement."

The General Board — composed of the representatives of 134 affiliated unions, trade and industrial

departments and the Executive Council — backed up its position with a detailed comparison of the party platforms with the AFL-CIO program and an analysis of the voting records of Kennedy and Vice President Nixon.

An endorsement statement called Kennedy "intelligent, articulate and forceful," adding that "on almost every issue between the money interest and the people's interest — housing, schools, health and all the rest — Kennedy voted with the people, Nixon voted against the people."

Nixon's history as a "partisan campaigner both for himself and the national ticket," the board said, "raises grave questions of his fitness." Noting that he had impugned the loyalty of numerous opponents including "a President of the United States," the statement added that "since he is neither naive nor uninformed we must conclude he knew better in every case."

A comparative voting record compiled by the Committee on Political Education going back to 1947 revealed that on 131 key votes Kennedy voted 91.6 per cent "right" from labor's viewpoint and "wrong" on .02 per cent.

Nixon's record on 77 key votes was 13 per cent "right and 76.6 per cent "wrong."

The voting record covers civil rights, civil service, consumers, education, foreign policy, health, housing, immigration, labor, migratory labor, minimum wage, public power, small business, social security, taxes, tidelands and veterans.

Comparing the vice presidential

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Attention All Affiliates!

An unofficial labor committee is seeking support for Proposition No. 1 — the \$1.75 billion water program — in direct conflict with the California Labor Federation's recommendation by convention action that the proposition be defeated at the polls.

Under the name of "California State Labor Committee for Water Development," the unofficial labor group is sending out form resolutions asking both local union support and contributions for the water scheme.

Affiliates are reminded of the official convention action opposing Proposition No. 1.

Congress to Adjourn: Session a Fiasco

Congress this Tuesday sent the President its "pauper's oath" medical care measure for the aged, and adjourned this Thursday with its post-convention session an almost complete fiasco.

The controlling Republican-Dixiecrat coalition effectively killed all major public welfare programs pushed by Senator John F. Kennedy, the Democratic Presidential nominee, and vigorously backed by the AFL-CIO.

Forand-type health care amendments for the aged under Social Security were beaten down last week when the Senate adopted a "cleaned-up" version of the House-passed assistance program.

As sent to the President, the medical care measure would put into effect a two-part federal-state

program of subsidies to the aged who need help to pay their medical bills.

Just what payments would be made to the medical needy, what standards they would have to meet to be eligible, and what benefits they would get rest entirely with the states — subject to federal approval. Hard-pressed states have

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Congress to Adjourn: Session a Fiasco

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the absolute right to refuse to participate in the medical care program.

All hope for major housing and federal aid to education measures was abandoned early in the post-convention session of Congress. In each case, the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition refused to let the bills get out of the hands of key committees.

The same coalition has blocked the reconciliation of major differences between the Senate and House versions of a minimum wage bill. Senator Kennedy was laboring down to the wire, without success, to gain clearance of a compromise measure.

While disqualifying thousands under a so-called technical error, the House-passed minimum wage measure would have increased the present \$1.00 per hour federal minimum to \$1.15 and extended coverage to about 1.4 million workers in the presently exempted retail and service industries. The Kennedy measure passed by the Senate would have increased the minimum

to \$1.25 over a three-year span and extended coverage to about 4 million additional workers.

Without success in conference committee, Senator Kennedy expressed a willingness to meet the \$1.15 level of the House bill, provided the Senate coverage provisions were accepted. The House committee refused to budge on both items.

On the coverage aspect, the House measure would have extended coverage only to retailers with at least five outlets operating in more than one state — in other words, only the very largest chain store operations. The Kennedy measure, on the other hand, would have provided coverage for any retailer with annual gross sales of one million dollars or more.

Even Senator Kennedy's last attempt to split the difference was rejected by the Republican-Dixiecrat reactionaries.

The Democratic nominee served notice that in the refusal of Congress to act, he will take the issues to the people in his Presidential campaign.

Meany Outlines 4-Point Political Action Program

This four-point program to give the fullest possible effectiveness to the Federation's endorsement of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket was recommended to the AFL-CIO General Board by President George Meany as chairman of COPE and James R. McDevitt, COPE director:

1—That every national and international union, itself and through its local unions, undertake a campaign to insure that all its members and their families are registered to vote; and in addition, that each national and international union participate fully in the AFL-CIO 1960 Registration Drive.

2—That the analysis of the party platforms, party performance and candidates' voting records submitted to this meeting of the General Board be given the widest possible circulation among union members and the American people as a whole.

3—That a more intensive effort than ever before be made to collect \$1 voluntary contributions from union members for the support of COPE-endorsed candidates for Congress and state office.

4—That all union members be urged to make additional voluntary contributions to promote the election of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket.

Special State Fair Events to Honor Labor

Labor Day, at the State Fair in Sacramento, will feature a series of special events honoring California labor, it was announced today.

A record turnout of workers and their families are expected to jam the turnstiles at the giant State Fair on Labor Day, Monday, September 5. The Fair opens this Wednesday, running for 12 days.

Under the sponsorship of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, arrangements for Labor Day events are being made by Harry Finks, Sacramento Vice President of the Federation, and Secretary of the Sacramento-Yolo Central Labor Council.

Labor Day festivities will be launched with a special luncheon on the Fair grounds to be held in the Directors' dining room. Governor Edmund G. Brown, and Federation Secretary-Treasurer Thos. L. Pitts will share luncheon honors with trade unionists from northern and southern California in attendance.

A "Labor Day" purse will highlight the day's horse racing program in the afternoon. Presentations to the winning owner will be made by Thos. L. Pitts, on behalf of the California labor movement.

In the course of the day's activities both Pitts and Governor Brown are scheduled to participate in a series of TV and radio broadcasts on the general subject of labor's total involvement in community affairs affecting the welfare of workers and the general public.

Other highlights of the day will be topped off with a special evening fireworks display in front of the main grandstand.

The fireworks display will feature a hundred-foot long lettering of the AFL-CIO, the California Labor Federation insignia and union label displays.

The celebration of Labor Day at the California State Fair is an annual event. In previous state fairs, the largest turnouts have been recorded over the Labor Day weekend.

IWC Appointments

Governor Edmund G. Brown has announced the appointment of Norman S. Lezin, Santa Cruz business executive, to a four-year term on the California Industrial Welfare Commission. Lezin succeeds Virginia Allee of Beverly Hills, who has had a pronounced anti-labor bias in the work of the Commission regarding the setting of standards for wages, hours and working conditions for women, minors and handicapped workers.

The appointment comes at a time when the Industrial Welfare Commission is in the throes of considering the establishment of a Wage Order for women and minors in agriculture. Earlier in the year, the Commission took steps in this direction when it created an Agricultural Wage Board, which is due to report soon on its recommendations to the Commission.

Lezin, 35 years of age, is vice president of the Pacific Industries Incorporated in charge of the A. K. Saltz Tannery Division in Santa Cruz. He is a Democrat.

Farm Labor Front

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progress in the pear harvest areas, and four disputes in the peach harvest.

The effectiveness of AWOC in establishing a higher floor on wage levels was attested to last week when the Department of Employment announced the prevailing wage rate in peaches in connection with bracero importation procedures. The state agency declared the prevailing rate to be 17 cents per box and up for cling peaches. The rates coincided with AWOC minimums, marking the first time bracero rates have been influenced by anyone but the growers themselves.

GROWERS HYSTERICAL

In the face of AWOC successes, anti-union growers associations are resorting to hysterical charges of "collusion" between government agencies and the AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers.

The grower associations are finding it difficult to relinquish the virtual dictatorial control over harvest wage rates and bracero importations which they have heretofore exercised.

Last week, when the Department of Employment announced its findings of the prevailing rate in peaches, the Tri-County Agricultural Committee (Yuba, Butte and Sutter Counties) immediately charged that the state and federal officials were bowing to AWOC demands.

Instead of a 17 cents per box rate, the Committee said that its own surveys indicated that the wage being paid in Yuba, Butte and Sutter Counties averaged only 14 cents to 16 cents a 40-pound box. In the past such grower surveys have generally been taken as the prevailing rate.

Earlier, the same Tri-Counties Agricultural Committee accused organized labor and the U. S. Department of Labor officials of creating "obvious and indirect obstacles" to the use of Mexican Nationals in crop harvests.

Amid charges of "outright conspiracy," the grower committee, claiming representation of some 1,500 farmers in northern California, called for a "serious investigation into Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell's administration of the federal farm labor importation program."

State AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Thos. L. Pitts immediately labeled the charges a "deliberate falsehood," declaring:

"For this committee to charge that the long overdue enforcement of labor laws relating to Mexican Nationals constitutes a conspiracy between these officials and labor, is to declare that the law itself is a cover for subterfuge and deceit."

Pitts added:

"The growers' allegations are, as Sec-

retary of Labor Mitchell has said, 'ridiculous.' But they are more. They are themselves conspiratorial against the public sense of decency and its refusal to accept the need for cheap imported labor while domestics stand idle."

The Federation official stated further: "The hoax behind the growers' contention that they will need Mexican Nationals in the next six weeks is apparent from the continued unemployment of thousands of domestic agricultural workers in California to date. In fact, many thousands of others have been able to work in the place of braceros only because of labor's strenuous efforts to implement domestic workers' federally guaranteed prior rights to the jobs."

PUERTO RICANS NEXT??

Recognizing a threat to their heretofore unlimited supply of cheap bracero labor, growers are already exploring other potential sources of importation.

This week, former state Farm Placement Chief Edward Hayes, who was bounced last year when Governor Brown cleaned house, was reported in Puerto Rico recruiting for an Imperial Valley growers' association.

As American citizens, Puerto Ricans are not covered by federal regulations dealing with the importation of workers from Mexico.

AWOC Director Norman Smith has blasted the scheme as just another phase of the continuing efforts by the growers to push domestic workers from the fields. Smith warned, however, "Puerto Ricans, unlike braceros, can be organized. Many of them are already members of unions — and they cannot be sent back home once the grower is through with them."

Meanwhile, Secretary of Labor James

IN THE COURTS

On the legal front, adverse rulings from state superior courts in the Di-Giorgio and Tom Bowers disputes (reported in previous News Letters) are now on appeal by the state.

The two decisions ordered the Department to refer farm workers through AWOC picket lines in clear violation of the federal Wagner-Peyser Act.

At the recent state AFL-CIO convention in Sacramento, state Director of Employment Irving H. Perluss made it clear that he could not rest on the Superior Court rulings in these cases.

"We have no choice but to observe the court orders," Perluss said, "but we need an authoritative, final decision from the higher state or federal courts so that we can know where we stand, and we are therefore pursuing such appeals."

P. Mitchell is holding firm on existing regulations which prohibit job referrals in struck situations under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

Recently, Mitchell announced that the

NLRB Finds Kohler Guilty; Orders 3000 Reinstated

In a climactic decision, which may resolve the bitter six-year-old Kohler strike, the NLRB unanimously ordered the notorious anti-union company to "bargain collectively" with Auto Workers' Local 833.

Kohler was also ordered to reinstate, with full seniority, rank and file strikers who had not been permanently replaced before June 1, 1954. UAW estimates some 3,000 workers are potentially eligible for reinstatement; 126 have died and 77 are denied reinstatement.

The NLRB also directed Kohler to:

- Dismiss, if necessary, any workers hired on or after June 1, 1954, in order to restore strikers to their jobs.

- Place applicants on a preferential hiring list if there are insufficient jobs, and pay lost wages to eligible strikers beginning five days after application for reinstatement and until a job is offered.

- Furnish Local 833, on its request, with information on incentive earnings.

- Offer 10 strikers immediate occupancy of company-owned quarters from which they were evicted for taking part in the strike.

- Offer jobs on request to 44 workers fired from the shell department in July, 1954.

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candidates, the board said of Republican Henry Cabot Lodge that his service in the United Nations "deserves the greatest approbation" although limited by the "narrowness of Republican policy." His record in Congress, it added, "suffers primarily at those points when party policy took preference over personal conviction."

Johnson was described as a "dominant force" in the last three congresses whose leadership effectiveness has been universally acknowledged. While the AFL-CIO has not agreed with Johnson's concept of the role of Congress in a divided government and has not agreed with his voting record on balance, he has a liberal record that has become "increasingly liberal with the years," the board said.

public hearings on the subject, already postponed on three occasions, have now been postponed indefinitely. Prior to the indefinite postponement, hearings had been scheduled for August 22.

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Consumer Protection Against 'Suede Shoe' Operators Urged

State action to protect consumers against "suede shoe" operators in the home improvement field was urged before the State Senate Fact Finding Committee on Business and Commerce at hearings held this Monday and Tuesday in San Francisco.

Conclusive evidence of how the "suede shoe" operators are milking home owners of millions of dollars annually on shoddy, overpriced roofing, patio and other home repair jobs, was detailed before the Fact Finding Committee by representatives of organized labor, the state Consumer Counsel's office, the construction industry, San Francisco Better Business Bureau and others.

The two-day hearing was based on an Assembly concurrent resolution (ACR 77) authored by Assemblyman Charles W. Meyers of San Francisco, which calls for a state legislative study looking forward to remedial action. Meyers introduced the study measure following the adoption of a resolution on the subject by the 1958 convention of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

The San Francisco Assemblyman produced an array of witnesses backing up demands for action, which focused on legislation to make the "suede shoe" salesman responsible to the contractors who actually do the job by licensing the fast talkers under the state contractors licensing law.

The pinning down of responsibility through the licensing mechanism was pressed by representatives of the California Labor Federation and the building trades, with the solid backing of William Cole, who presented a detailed

statement on behalf of state Consumer Counsel Helen Nelson.

The hearings were opened with a film showing the fast-talking "suede shoe" operator at work, produced by the Better Business Bureau of San Francisco.

Vernon A. Libby, general manager of the Better Business Bureau, placed the bilking of consumers by the "suede shoe" boys in the home improvement field alone at \$500 million annually.

In lengthy testimony, Lamar Childers of the Alameda Building and Construction Trades Council explained how the professional "bunco" artists descend upon a community and sell inferior home improvement jobs at exorbitant prices, and then skip town after selling the financing contract and arranging for an inferior job with a contractor.

In some cases, it was pointed out, the "suede shoe" operator makes a preliminary contact with the contractor who is to do the job, but in many cases the "bunco" artist sells the repair or remodeling job and then shops around for the cheapest job. In any event, the first time the homeowner comes in contact with the contractor is when the job is actually performed.

By then, Childers said, the "suede shoe" operator has skipped town and the contractor is responsible only for the actual job contracted for by the gypo artist. Many small contractors, it was noted, become a party to the swindle out of economic necessity.

Howard Jewel of the Consumer Frauds Division of the Attorney General's office described the virtual

impossibility of securing criminal convictions of the "suede shoe" boys, and the total inadequacy of civil action.

In support of making the contractor responsible for the repair salesman with whom he contracts, William Cole of the state Consumer Counsel's office reviewed the various "pitches" used by the "professional bunco artist, skilled in his trade." These were described as the "model home" or "referral" pitch, and the "switch and sell" pitch.

Cole emphasized that it is totally unfair under the guise of "freedom to contract," to pit the homeowner against the professional "bunco artist." The consumer, he said, "must be protected."

In testimony by Ernest G. Kramm, spokesman for the National Electrical Contractors Association, the blame for the consumer frauds was placed on the state's failure to provide sufficient qualified investigators on the staff of the Contractors' State Licensing Board. Kramm also indicated, however, that the licensing mechanism needed tightening up.

Speaking for the Contractors' State License Board, Harry W. Abrahams said:

"We should license them (suede shoe operators), and right off we'd eliminate half of them when they were checked by the Criminal Identification and Investigation Department. . . . Most of them have criminal records as long as your arm."

Abrahams also urged that home improvement salesmen be required to wear badges bearing their photographs while they are on the job.

Although the fact-finding committee initially appeared to be in opposition to legislative action, as the testimony unfolded a noticeable change in attitude developed. Two Senators committed themselves to making the contractors responsible for the door to door salesmen.