

# L.A. AFL-CIO Calls Consumer Conference

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, in cooperation with the Consumers Union and the University Extension at UCLA, has scheduled a conference on consumer problems for the weekend of September 25-27.

Titled "The Consumer and Purchasing Power," the conference will commence at 5:00 p.m. Friday and continue through noon on Sunday, according to W. J. Bassett, secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO federation.

The L.A. session is further evidence of labor's increasing role in the promotion and protection of consumer interests.

Bassett said that "the primary purpose of the conference is to lay the groundwork for complete preparations for year-round consumer activities by the Community Services Department of the Los Angeles Labor Federation, in conjunction with the consumer program of the State of California and in augmenting the national program of the AFL-CIO Community Services Committee."

It is also the purpose of the Los Angeles group, Bassett pointed out, to work closely with the California Labor Federation and its standing Committee on Community Services in the field of consumer interests.

Earlier in July of this year, the California Labor Federation co-sponsored a consumer conference in San Francisco in cooperation

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## AFL-CIO Ex. Council Warns of Economic Stagnation Dangers

Warnings of a "shocking state of stagnation" in the nation's economy and a "marked deterioration" in international affairs were among the major findings of the AFL-CIO Executive Council in its report to the national organization's third merged convention which opened in San Francisco this Thursday, September 17.

The 376-page report issued to delegates will be reviewed by a convention committee and reported for delegate action, together with resolutions, as the convention takes up again on Monday, following a week-end recess.

Keynoted by President George Meany's observation that the labor movement has "weathered some of the worst storms in trade union history," the detailed report reviews developments in the labor movement since the 1957 convention and analyzes separate developments in the following areas: the national economy; international affairs; social security; workers and the community; safety; civil rights; labor's campaign against "right to work"

laws; national and state legislation; political activities; and internal operations.

(Still to be issued at the time of writing is a supplementary report on legislative issues, including the AFL-CIO analysis of the recently enacted labor-management reform bill.)

### Economic Stagnation Danger

A 43-page analysis of the domestic economy places much of the blame for a "dangerous slowdown of economic growth" on "restrictive governmental policies" which substitute fear of inflation for measures to stimulate expansion.

Because economic growth in the United States has been "slower than that of almost every other industrial country in the world," our national defense has been weakened, persistent unemployment has become a growing problem, labor-management relations have become more difficult and — because productivity has lagged — the danger of genuine inflation has been heightened, the report charges.

Overall economic growth at a rate of about five percent a year is essential to meet the nation's needs, the report says; and those who oppose measures toward this end have lost faith in America's tradition of progress.

The report credits trade union strength, collective bargaining and unemployment insurance, with an assist from "belated government actions," for the nation's recovery from the 1958 recession. But more

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## Secy. of Labor Mitchell Acts on New Labor Law Administration

Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell announced in Washington this Monday that, with the signing into law of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, his Department has already taken steps to carry out new duties and responsibilities under the so-called reform legislation.

Of importance to all unions, Mitchell outlined the following steps:

"1. A new bureau to be known as the Bureau of Labor-Management Reports has been organized within the Department of Labor.

"2. Work is well along on the development of the necessary forms and procedural instructions to be issued by the Department of Labor for labor unions, management firms and management officials who will report under the new law.

"Within 10 days of this announce-

ment (Sept. 14) the Department will issue preliminary regulations advising unions of the procedures to be followed in filing trusteeship reports which are due within 30 days.

"The labor organization report form which is to accompany the submittal of copies of constitutions and by-laws from all unions within 90 days has been prepared in pre-

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# Third Housing Bill Goes to President

Faced with two successful vetoes of housing bills by the President, the Congress passed and sent Eisenhower a third measure virtually on the eve of adjournment this week.

The "third try," \$1 billion housing measure was modified slightly as Congressional leaders reported "positive assurance," that the President would sign it.

The measure literally sailed through the House of Representatives without amendment and by voice vote after being given a "rush" approval by the Senate. Eisenhower, however, is now faced with many of the provisions he objected to in the two earlier measures vetoed.

(In these earlier actions the President knocked down a \$1.3 billion bill as extravagant and inflationary and vetoed a pared-down \$1.05 billion measure on much the same grounds. His objections centered on public housing and direct loans and grant programs which run contrary to the interests of banking and financial interests in the housing field.)

The new \$1 billion bill before Eisenhower, with his signature pledged by Republicans, includes the 37,000 new public housing units to which he is strongly opposed. He also found objectionable \$50 million in loans aimed to provide housing for the elderly, which remains in the new bill. The "third try" measure eliminated, however, some \$50 million in direct grants for college classrooms, a provision Eisenhower did not want.

The President had protested that the \$650 million in urban renewal and slum clearance funds for one year was too much. The new bill splits this total over two years.

In the eyes of organized labor, the new housing measure, like previously vetoed measures, falls far short of meeting the nation's housing needs, because of the failure to supply a housing program for middle income families who are presently priced out of the expensive FHA, VA and conventional loan-financing housing.

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with the University of California and other consumer groups. This was followed by the formation of an independent California Consumer Association with the active participation of organized labor.

The San Diego convention of the California Labor Federation in August gave full endorsement to the new Association as a means of coordinating labor efforts with other consumer groups and also to provide a base of support for activities of California's new office of Consumer Counsel established by the state legislature this year.

A full weekend is planned for the Los Angeles Consumer Conference.

Featured Saturday morning will be Stanley Ruttenberg, Research Director of the national AFL-CIO, who will discuss with conference participants the overall subject of inflation and the consumer, including the wage, price and profit relationship. The role of "administered pricing" by the nation's giant corporations will draw major attention in addition to other aspects of pricing.

Dr. Mildred E. Brady, editorial director for the Consumers Union, is scheduled to follow Ruttenberg with a discussion of "An Overview of Consumer Problems," embracing the consumer's dilemma, advertising, buying habits, "motivation manipulators," quality and price control, buying techniques, functioning of consumer laws and

regulatory agencies, installment buying, state and federal debt and credit control legislation and other related matters.

C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, will deliver the major luncheon session address on Saturday on the subject of "California AFL-CIO Services to the Consumer." He will be followed by other speakers: Joseph Lewis, secretary, Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO; and the Consumer Counsel of California, if the Governor makes the appointment by the time the conference takes place.

On Saturday afternoon, conference participants will break up into three workshops to discuss the subject matters taken up by conference speakers. Four resource experts, including Leo Perlis, director of the AFL-CIO Community Services, Professor Frederick Myers of UCLA, and Stanley Ruttenberg of the AFL-CIO will be on hand for the workshop sessions to stimulate broad participation.

The Sunday morning session will feature a panel on "Safeguarding the Consumer — A Program of Action."

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor has labeled the scheduled conference a "must" for affiliated AFL-CIO organizations in the south who have been urged to insure widest possible attendance.

# MORE -- Secretary of Labor Mitchell Acts

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liminary form and a quarter of a million copies will be distributed for the use of unions well in advance of the expiration of the 90-day period.

"3. General information bulletins explaining the provisions of the law for the guidance of labor and management officials, union members and the general public are being prepared for release.

"4. The AFL-CIO and representative management trade associations have been requested to designate representatives to consult, in the initial phases of planning, with officials of the Department of Labor on the details of the new law

with respect to the particular provisions affecting them.

"5. Representatives of the Department of Labor in 21 major cities across the country will be available immediately to explain the provisions of the law to interested persons." (In California, these representatives will be stationed in San Francisco and Los Angeles.)

In San Francisco, John F. Ryan can be reached at room 315, 630 Sansome Street, telephone YUkon 6-3111, extension 312. In Los Angeles, Walter I. M. Brockbank will be located in room 1257 Western Pacific Building, 1031 South Broadway, telephone RIchmond 9-4711, extension 388.



# MORE -- AFL-CIO Executive Council Warns

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recent Administration policies indicate that "these lessons have not been learned."

What is needed, the report asserts, is a 16-point program including continuing pay increases; lower unit profit margins to stimulate sales; an end to "tight money" and low-level budget balancing; improved unemployment compensation, social security and wage-hour laws; a shorter work-week; a wide range of social legislation; tax revision, and further study by Congress of the causes of inflation.

This chapter of the report concludes with a review of collective bargaining developments in the last two years and of legislation affecting wages.

## International Affairs

A 23-page discussion of international affairs reiterates the AFL-CIO's opposition to the Soviet Union with special stress on the Soviet's economic challenge. It also emphasizes the organization's support for democratic regimes throughout the world against colonialism, fascism and other forms of totalitarianism.

The report sets forth in some detail the AFL-CIO role in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and its western hemisphere branch. The "great changes in the international situation" in the 10 years since the ICFTU was founded call for "critical re-examination" of the world body's programs, budget and structure, the report says; and at the forthcoming ICFTU congress in December "serious efforts must be made to reinvigorate and rededicate the ICFTU to its indispensable world role."

A section on the International Labor Organization assails the "disruptive activities" of the Soviet bloc, and also hits U.S. employer representatives for continuing to "oppose virtually all of the constructive and forward-looking actions" of the ILO. U.S. government delegates, the report finds, have shown "evidence of slight improvement" on the latter score.

On the nation's foreign economic policy, the report finds "the record on the whole has been poor," mostly because of the Administration's re-

fusal to push for enough funds for a long enough term."

## Other Issues

A chapter on social security welcomes improvements in retirement and disability benefits but deplors the limited progress in such fields as health benefits, public assistance, unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation and hospital construction.

In a chapter entitled "Worker and the Community," the report describes the growing role of unions in community services. Sections of this chapter also deal with AFL-CIO views and efforts with regard to housing and education. Its final seven pages are devoted to apprenticeship and vocational training. The report is sharply critical of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, whose Office of Education, it says, is trying to "destroy real vocational training and apprenticeship."

With respect to civil rights, the report devotes primary attention to the AFL-CIO efforts to wipe out discrimination within its own affiliates.

"To be sure, there are in labor's own ranks those who do not believe in equal opportunity," the report acknowledges. "Our task has been to strengthen these weak links that endanger the strength of the whole trade union movement, and to reinforce the bonds of brotherhood that make the union strong."

The report emphasizes "our determination to prevent and stamp out all discrimination because of race, creed or color in labor's own ranks," and notes that "in many southern localities our unions were not only ahead of the rest of the community . . . but also had to bear the brunt of vicious attacks by employers who stooped to outright promotion of race hate among their employees."

Another chapter reviews AFL-CIO activities in promoting safety on and off the job. Still another discusses last year's generally successful battle against so-called "right to work" laws but warns that the supporters of such legislation are gathering "great new sums of money" for a "massive campaign on a national level."

# Swift Products Boycott Urged

The nation's butchers and packinghouse workers issued a joint appeal this week to all trade unionists and their friends to refrain from purchasing Swift meat products pending settlement of a contract dispute.

Nearly 20,000 members of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters & Butcher Workmen of North America have been on strike against Swift and Company, the largest meat packer in the United States, since September 4.

All of the 36 slaughtering and processing plants of the company are closed tight. The company is still operating some six plants under contract with an independent union which both organizations involved in the strike have always considered to be company-dominated.

The unions charge that it is only Swift and Company that is using its strength to break or seriously weaken the effectiveness of the two unions involved.

Armour and Company, the second largest of the meat packers in the United States, signed a contract with both organizations. This contract provides for an 8½c hourly increase for the first year, and 6½c hourly for the second year of the two-year agreement.

With the other fringe benefits, the Armour package for the workers amounts to 25c per hour in increases. Armour and Company also agreed to the union shop in those states permitting same, and intends to use the union label on all of its products in all of its plants in the future.

In addition to the completed agreement signed and sealed with Armour and Company, other major concerns are in complete agreement to follow the Armour pattern. Among these large companies where it is agreed there will be no strike are Oscar Mayer & Co., Cudahy, Wilson, Morrell, Hormel, Rath Packing Co., Hygrade, and hundreds of other independent meat packers throughout the United States whose plants are still operating.

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## Governor Brown Appoints Automation Study Committee

Governor Edmund G. Brown announced this week that a committee of his Governor's Council has been assigned "the highly important task of studying the effect of automation and mechanization on employment in California."

The committee consists of the directors of the Departments of Employment, Industrial Relations, Social Welfare, Mental Hygiene and Education.

Brown noted that preliminary inquiries on the subject show that the impact of automation and mechanization is already being felt in a wide variety of industries.

"Peak labor requirements for the cotton harvest are down from 120,000 to 60,000 as the result of the use of cotton picking machines," the Governor said. "One brewery has eliminated both its swing and graveyard shifts. Petroleum refinery employment is down because of automation, and there have been sharp declines in laundry payrolls due to automatic equipment."

"None of us can afford to slow down or impede the introduction of new and better ways of doing our work," Governor Brown said. "They mean greater productivity and higher standards of living. But we cannot ignore the fact that we must at the same time assist those who are displaced in developing new skills and finding other productive places in our economy."

He said the committee's task will be to find out what can or should be done to make this transition "as painless as possible and as fruitful for all the people of this state as it can be."

Brown pointed out that some of the problems of the retraining of workers and radical changes in job

## Gray Urges Steelworker Support

Declaring that jurisdictional disputes must not be allowed to get in the way of all-out labor backing of the Steelworkers in its current dispute with the basic steel industry, Richard J. Gray, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department said that "if management can succeed in licking the Steelworkers, we'll be next on the list."

In an address to the 49th convention of the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, Gray pleaded that jurisdictional disputes be "settled in our own house, as a family affair," adding:

"No matter what our personal emotions (about jurisdictional rows) may be, we can't allow them to serve the purpose of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce, which want to see us get at each others' throats. Employers would be tickled to see a division of labor at this critical time."

requirements will extend back into the secondary school curricula.

He also noted a "forward looking step taken in the last legislative session."

"The unemployment insurance law was amended to permit the payment of benefits to workers who have been unemployed for an extended period, and who enroll in approved training courses which will give them new skills or improve existing ones," the Governor said. "California is one of three states which have built this concept into their unemployment insurance laws. It now applies only when unemployment rates are somewhat higher than the present levels, but it is a significant start."

The retraining provision was part of the new improvements negotiated by the California Labor Federation.

## IWC Hearing on Agricultural Labor

The agenda will include, but is Commission will meet on October 9, 1959, at 10 a.m. in Room 602, 965 Mission Street, San Francisco, it was announced this week by John W. Quimby, Commission chairman.

The agenda will include, but is not limited to, discussion and action on the question of convening an agricultural wage board, and amendment of Section 26 to allow employees, as well as employers, to request exemption from the provisions of Section 17, concerning weight lifting.

Any person wishing to bring any other matter before the Commission at that time is free to do so, Quimby said. He requested prior notification to the Commission's secretary in San Francisco from individuals planning to testify.

The scheduled action on an agricultural wage board relates to the establishment of a state minimum wage for women and minors engaged in farm labor. It follows a series of hearings held in various parts of the state on the subject during the past year and a half.

The California AFL-CIO stirred the Commission into action at the last opening of wage orders in 1956 when Secretary C. J. Haggerty charged the Commission was flouting the mandate of the legislature in failing to even consider minimum wage protections for this most exploited group of workers.

Haggerty's charges were upheld by the Attorney General's office, which stated that the Commission had clear jurisdiction over women and minors in agriculture.

This week in San Francisco, the state AFL-CIO leader said that the Federation will be on hand at the October meeting to urge that the Commission "break the corporate farmer barrier and extend a measure of social justice to the women and children of agriculture."