

CONSUMER INTERESTS REPRESENTED

California's new Consumer Counsel, the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, and the State Grange last week joined forces to oppose the allowance of "deficiency tolerances" in the declared net weight on frozen foods and packaged meats.

The occasion was a hearing before the State Department of Agriculture on proposals to permit short-weights on thirty-two frozen food items, frankfurters, chitterlings, and a request by the retail grocers to consider the possibility of permitting similar short-weights on packaged fresh meats sold at self-service counters.

The frozen foods "deficiency tolerance," supported by the frozen food industry, would allow short-weights of "one ounce for each two pounds or fraction thereof of the marked weight."

Cello-packed frankfurters were singled out among meat products in a proposal to allow a short-weight of "one-half ounce for each two pounds or fraction thereof of the marked weight."

County sealers of weights and measures, who attended the department hearings en masse, openly wel-

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U.S. Civil Rights Commission To Hold Hearings in State

The United States Civil Rights Commission, established a few years ago by Act of Congress, will be investigating racial discrimination in California next month, with hearings set for Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The Commission's advance survey team was in the area recently making arrangements for groups and individuals who will be requested to testify before the Commission.

Hearings are set for January 25-26 in Los Angeles, and January 27 in San Francisco.

Although the Commission has subpoena powers, appearances before the Commission will be by invitation only. Various groups active in the field of civil rights have been asked to submit written statements by January 15. Invitations to appear before the Commission for all presentations will be based on the written statement submitted and interviews with interested groups.

The California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO is among the active civil rights groups which have been inter-



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MOBILIZATION URGED FOR STEELWORKERS SUPPORT

Pointing out that the steelworkers have been singled out as the "front line of attack by big business interests," C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, this week urged central labor councils statewide to mobilize full support behind the AFL-CIO's Steelworkers' campaign.

"The struggle transcends the immediate interests of the steel industry and the steelworkers alone," Haggerty said. "This is a battle between big business and the working people—big business and the best interests of all people."

With these words, Haggerty directed a letter to all central labor councils, urging an all-out effort behind a recently announced national

AFL-CIO program. This program calls upon every city central body to:

1. Mobilize a "support the steelworkers' campaign" in each council jurisdiction.
2. Inform every affiliated union of the necessity and emergency of steelworker support.
3. Establish a representative committee of top leadership in each central body to contact the principal officer of each local, determining exactly what each local is doing to support the campaign.

In a follow-up action, Haggerty forwarded a copy of his central labor council letter to every affiliated local union in the state. "Full support of today's 'shock troops'—the steelworkers—can eliminate the necessity of a growing series of costly efforts to defend the simple economic justice achieved in the last quarter century," the state AFL-CIO leader warned.

The following is the full text of Haggerty's communication to all central labor councils:

To: All Local Central Labor Councils

Dear Sir and Brother:

I am writing you in regard to President Meany's urgent call to mobilize support for the Steelworkers' campaign.

As you know President Meany has said, "No other task of your central body is more important."

Why?

Because there has been a change. The change has occurred in the attitude of the leaders of

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Mobilization Urged for Steelworkers Support

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big business. They have determined to end the past traditional relationships with the labor movement. They have determined on class war—class war, as it has been said, from the top—determined to influence all business, the country and the Congress of the United States.

It is now crystal clear that the Steelworkers have been singled out as the front line of attack by Big Business interests.

But the struggle transcends the immediate interests of the steel industry and the Steelworkers alone. This is a battle between Big Business and the working people—between Big Business and the best interests of all the people.

It is a showdown battle for great stakes—an expanding prosperous economy or a retreat to an economy of scarcity—free collective bargaining or a substantial move toward government supported corporate dictation.

The success or failure of the Steelworkers' battle will sit as a real participant at every collective bargaining table—as a powerful policy making precedent in the future collective bargaining of every one of your affiliated organizations.

These are the stakes—your stakes—in the struggle. The steel industry must not succeed in its deliberate effort to lead the country into turning back the clock.

It is essential that you give every possible assistance to helping the Steelworkers Union win the nation-wide Taft-Hartley vote against the steel corporations' "last offer." The NLRB vote is scheduled in January, 1960. Big industry is out to show that the country would be better off without labor unions. Their challenge must be combatted by the united efforts of the entire labor movement.

President Meany has told us: "There is every reason to believe the Steelworkers will be forced to strike again on January 26th."

The magnificent solidarity of the Steelworkers in this crucial struggle deserves our full support.

I know the California Labor Federation can count on your or-

ganization's support of President Meany's request to "inform every affiliated local union of the necessity and the emergency of this situation"—to "write, phone, or personally call on each local union, informing them of the AFL-CIO policy of raising an hour's pay per month from every member for the Steelworkers' Defense Fund."

Fraternally and urgently yours,
C. J. HAGGERTY,
Secretary-Treasurer.

In his follow-up letter to all local unions enclosing a copy of the central labor council communication, Haggerty said:

"Your union can expedite the efforts of your local central labor

council officers by contacting them as soon as possible, pledging your immediate implementation of this central priority program of support for the epic struggle of the steelworkers.

"Now is the time to demonstrate practical, moral and financial support to the steelworkers. In the hours of decision ahead let us show our united determination to preserve collective bargaining over job conditions.

"Full support for today's 'shock troops'—the steelworkers—can eliminate the necessity of a growing series of costly efforts to defend the simple economic justice achieved in the past quarter century."

RIGID INTERPRETATION ISSUED ON UNION ELECTIONS

The casting of a "white ballot" in a union election when only one person has been nominated for an office is illegal under the Landrum-Griffin bill.

This ruling was recently issued by Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell in promulgating rules and regulations interpreting the Landrum-Griffin provisions dealing with the election of union officers.

Answering some of the more frequently asked questions on this phase of the new law, Mitchell declared that secret ballots must be taken as required by the new law, even for elections in which there is no contest.

The Secretary of Labor's rigid interpretation was coupled with another ruling that the Act does not permit any exception to the requirement for mailing notices of an election to each member not less than 15 days before the election.

Although the practices of announcing elections in the union publication is not prohibited, Mitchell said that such methods of notice are not permitted as alternatives to the 15-day requirement for the individual mailed-out notices.

The "election" interpretations were issued together with rules and regulations on the "bonding" and "general coverage" provisions of the new labor law. (The bonding interpretations were reported in last week's News Letter.)

All rulings are printed in the Federal Register under Title 29, Chapter IV, and may be obtained by writing the Bureau of Labor-Management Reports of the U. S. Department of Labor in Washington. As of this date, copies have not been

generally available at the California offices of the Bureau.

In his "general coverage" interpretations, Mitchell said that all labor organizations of any kind, except those specifically exempt, are covered, regardless of their size and regardless of whether they are formally organized.

The members of such labor organizations need not be employees of any particular employer with whom the organization deals.

To be covered, the organization must exist at least partly for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, disputes, or terms and conditions of employment, or it must be a so-called "intermediate body" such as a conference, general committee, joint or system board, or joint board subordinate to a national or international organization.

Excluded from coverage under the definition are labor organizations composed entirely of government employees, since the definition of the term "employer" excludes the United States or any wholly owned corporation of the government, as well as state, county and municipal governments.

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Spanish U.I. and D.I. Pamphlets

Pamphlets explaining the eligibility and benefit provisions of the State Unemployment Insurance and Unemployment Disability Insurance programs in Spanish are now available at Department of Employment offices in the state.

The new Spanish pamphlets are made possible as a result of a Federation-sponsored bill enacted by the 1959 session of the California Legislature.

The proposal for Spanish-language informational literature originated from the Social Insurance Committee of the Los Angeles Federation of Labor, which offered a resolution on the subject adopted by the 1958 merger convention of the state AFL-CIO.

Local unions are urged to secure copies of the new pamphlets for their Spanish-speaking membership.

More - Union Elections

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According to Mitchell, federations, such as the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations are covered, although exempt from the election provisions of the Act.

In interpreting the section of the law dealing with labor organizations which charter local or subsidiary bodies, the Secretary's ruling pointed out that those national and international organizations which charter both government and non-government employee local unions are covered.

In discussing the definition which includes "intermediate bodies" of labor organizations, the interpretations lists as examples of those groups covered, the various conferences of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters as well as similar conferences and councils of other national and international labor organizations. As examples of covered joint councils, the interpretative statement lists district and joint councils of national and international labor organizations, including local councils of the building and construction trades labor organizations.

The Secretary has interpreted that, in excluding state or local central bodies from the definition of labor organization, Congress was referring to those organizations which are now chartered directly by the AFL-CIO, and which are required to admit to membership all local unions of national and international unions and organizing committees affiliated with the AFL-CIO, together with other locals or other subordinate bodies having such affiliation.

Consumer Interests Represented

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comed the defense of consumer interests. Sealers have long recognized that any success achieved by processors in allowing "deficiency tolerances" would lead to total destruction of meaningful "net weights" on packaged items in grocery stores.

Making her first public appearance before an administrative body, Helen Nelson, the state's new Consumer Counsel, told the Department of Agriculture hearing officers:

"As consumers, we have watched our rights in the grocery store being steadily whittled away.

"As a result of deceptive packaging and disguised labeling, we already find ourselves in a game of blind man's buff when we seek to distinguish quality. Now we are asked to play roulette at the frozen foods bins and the meat counter."

Mrs. Nelson effectively attacked the specific short-weight tolerance being proposed.

Although a deficiency tolerance is proposed on 32 different frozen packaged foods of not greater than "one ounce for each two pounds or fraction thereof in the marked weight," the state Consumer Counsel pointed out that each of the 32 frozen food items are conventionally packed for consumers not "in two-pound packages, but in 'fractions thereof'."

"To allow a 'maximum tolerance and deficiency'—or short-weight—of one ounce on a package marked eight ounces is to allow a short-weight of 12½ per cent. On a ten ounce package, a one ounce 'tolerance in deficiency' would be a legalized short-weight of 10 per cent."

As Consumer Counsel, Mrs. Nelson added: "I am equally opposed to legitimizing short-weights at the meat counter."

The state AFL-CIO's opposition to "any and all deficiency tolerances" was presented by Don Vial on behalf of C. J. Haggerty, the Federation's secretary-treasurer.

Short-weights can mean only one thing, it was pointed out—"an attempt to make the consumer subsidize a particular distribution process by concealing from him the amount received at a particular price."

The Federation's representative noted that consumers can effectively

express their choice between different methods of marketing any particular food item only if an accurate net weight is declared. New distribution processes, it was pointed out, "are supposed to benefit the consumer, not milk him for the benefit of the processor."

Vial added that if there is any technological deficiency in a particular method of processing and packaging food, it should be reflected in the price of the product, and not concealed in short-weights designed to deceive the consumer.

The Federation representative also challenged the reason for singling out cello-packed frankfurters as the only meat product for the allowance of deficiency tolerances.

"It is proposed that the barn door be opened enough to allow the hot dog to squeeze out," Vial said. "But the hogs and cows will follow."

The Federation representative pointed to an item on the agenda at the hearing to study the possibility of allowing short-weights on fresh meats in self-service counters as specific evidence.

The Department of Agriculture, it was argued, has no authority whatsoever to consider deficiency tolerances on fresh meats because when the tolerance bill was before the legislature in 1957 it was specifically amended to remove the possibility of considering short-weights for fresh meats.

"This involves a \$17 million a year gouge on the consumer," the Federation representative said, "based on the per capita consumption of meat in California, and the shrinkage currently provided for in the packaging of meats."

"Why not ask the department to get the retail chains a key to Fort Knox?" Vial asked.

"It would be more above board as an alternative," he added, "to at least ask the department to include a \$17 million item in its next budget earmarked for distribution to the self-service markets in the state."

The State Grange, representing the family farmer, joined in opposition to short-weights by pointing out that the effect would be to further widen the spread between consumer prices and what the farmer gets out of the food dollar.

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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

\$250,000 Plan To Gain Assembly Control for Reapportionment

An unprecedented quarter of a million dollar proposal to gain control of the State Assembly at the 1960 election was disclosed recently in a letter distributed to Republican party leaders by Homer Preston of Los Angeles.

Party control of the legislature at the 1960 election is considered of basic importance because the 1961 legislative session will be charged with the task of reapportioning political districts for the next ten years, based on the 1960 census.

The party in control usually "gerrymanders" districts to secure the maximum number of seats possible during the decade ahead.

Preston's letter calls for a minimum budget of \$250,000 in supplemental political funds to unseat eight Democrats, selected as prime targets by the Republicans. The target districts, all held by labor-endorsed Assemblymen, are outside the state's three large metropolitan areas:

1. 3rd A.D. (Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Tehama and Yolo Counties). Incumbent—Lloyd W. Lowery (D).

2. 6th A.D. (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolumne counties). Incumbent—Paul J. Lunardi (D).

3. 10th A.D. (part of Contra Costa County). Incumbent—Jerome R. Waldie (D).

4. 33rd A.D. (part of Fresno County). Incumbent—Charles B. Garrigus (D).

5. 35th A.D. (Kings and Tulare counties). Incumbent—Myron Frew (D).

6. 49th A.D. (part of Kern County). Incumbent—John C. Williamson (D).

7. 72nd A.D. (western San Bernardino county). Incumbent—Eugene G. Nisbet (D).

8. 76th A.D. (Imperial County). Incumbent—Leverette B. House (D).

The proposed program would guarantee the following to the campaign of each selected candidate:

1. Mailings

(a) The cost of printing, addressing and postage for one complete mailing to registered Republicans prior to the June primary election.

(b) The cost of printing, addressing and postage for one complete mailing to all registered voters prior to the November general election.

2. One-quarter page advertisement in each newspaper in the district prior to both the primary and general elections.

3. A 100 per cent showing on billboards in the two months prior to the November general election. While this might vary from district to district, 7 sheets would be used in the primary. Both 7 and 24 sheets would be used in the general election.

4. Such other assistance as may be deemed necessary in the course of the campaign.

The following are excerpts from the Preston letter and proposed program:

"Even casual review of but a few of the legislative bills passed in the recent session should convince anyone that the legislative processes in our state are in the control of irresponsible persons. Reliable reports of the recent legislative session clearly indicates that there was much wheeling and dealing and not enough profound thinking and debate in establishing our laws. Continuation of the present majority control of the Assembly can only result in more and more irresponsible legislation **inimicable to the interests of business, industry, banking, the professions and last but not least, of all of our citizens.**

"It appears that a huge mistake in judgment, over the recent years, has caused our Party to more or less neglect election campaigns for the State Assembly while concentrating our forces on the election of national legislative bodies. Hence the number of governorships and state legislative offices held by Re-

publicans across the nation has diminished at an alarming rate.

"Certainly in 1960 the Presidential and Congressional elections are of extreme importance. However, it is rightly contended that if we properly and effectively prepare to win back control of our State Assembly we will have laid the cornerstone for a complete statewide Republican victory. . . .

"The Federal Census in 1960 will give California 7 additional Congressional Districts. Once the population figures are determined, the State Legislature, with the approval of the Governor, will redraw the boundaries of the 30 current and 7 new districts. Once these areas are redistricted, they cannot be changed again until after the 1970 Census. If the Democrats control both houses of the Legislature (as they now do), and the Governorship (which they now hold until 1962), it is not unreasonable to believe that they will rearrange the Congressional Districts to make it easier for Democrats to be elected or re-elected. Current estimates are that the Congressional Delegation will be changed from 16 Democrats and 14 Republicans, its present composition, to 30 Democrats and 7 Republicans (counting the 7 new seats). Estimates are that the Assembly will be reapportioned to consist of 68 Democrats and 12 Republicans. . . .

"Moreover, it is a known fact that labor union trained political personnel, in support of Democrats as a whole, are mobile and are shifted into areas as above outlined. Thusly, with even a minimal force versus virtually no opposition, union-sponsored Democrats have taken over many seats in non-metropolitan districts. Such state legislature seats carry every bit as much weight as do similar elective offices in urban areas. This is a very simple fact that seems to have been largely overlooked. . . ."