

[1943]

Radio - WLOL - 6 P.M.

SAT. SEPT 4

On Monday of next week the American people will observe one of our important national holidays, Labor Day. This year more than ever it is appropriate that all Americans give thought to the heroic struggle that common men everywhere are waging against the forces of Fascism and exploitation. In Italy the working people, long saddened and weary of Fascism, are beseeching the Fascist government of Badoglio for bread and peace. These men and women of labor are the democratic hope of the Italian people. In France the puppets of Hitler are being bravely resisted by the underground movement of the peasants and laboring men in whose hearts still burns the flame of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In Denmark, a nation famed the world over as a progressive democracy in which flourished the rights of labor and the common man, the workers are this day sacrificing life and home in a heroic resistance against the forces of brutality and oppression. In Norway, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Holland, Belgium, and Yugoslavia, and Greece it is the laboring men and women, the factory workers, the peasants-- yes, the ordinary people-- plan for and wait for the hour of liberation.

The enslaved peoples of a freedom-loving world base their hopes for deliverance from bondage upon the victorious march of the armies of the United Nations. Every American worker-- yes, every American citizen-- glories in the onward sweep of the mighty armies of Russia, China, Britain, and our own United States. The American people has joined in the common crusade against the enemies of freedom.

It is in this war-time setting of a world-wide struggle between the forces of freedom and oppression that America will observe Labor Day. Traditionally a day of rest and celebration, Labor Day this year will be

observed by workers remaining on their jobs so that every precious moment in the battle of production may be utilized in America's triumphant march to victory. With our armed forces dealing out crushing blows to the ~~the~~ ^{workers} enemy on all fighting fronts and with our ~~workers~~ meeting the test on the home front with equal success America is moving toward victory. We know that the military successes already achieved by the United Nations in this war could never have come to pass without the superior equipment produced by the members of organized labor in America. We know that the thousands of production records made by patriotic American workers have brought into reality the fact that America is the arsenal of democracy. Yes, our miracle of production is a co-operative effort on the part of management and labor. It has taken this unity to achieve full employment and full production in war-time; it will take the same spirit of cooperation and unity to achieve ^{security} ~~prosperity~~ and prosperity in ~~the~~ peace-time.

~~As~~ American workers are not only producing the instruments of warfare; they are also thinking of the kind of ~~a~~ world they live in and the sort of world they wish to see in the tomorrow of peace. Our first task is to win the war and to win it decisively, but in the winning of the war decisions are made, policies are adopted which fundamentally affect our lives as citizens today and in the future. We are interested in the news. We are interested in the battlefronts but we are also concerned about the homefront. You as workers in factories, offices, and shops have been busy this past week. Much has happened of vital importance to you. Democracy demands an informed public. We must keep abreast of the current happenings. We must be keen observers of events which shape our national policy.

Among the important events of the past week was an appeal by Mr. George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, in

a nationwide radio address, wherein he stated that organized labor demands postwarinternational cooperation to make sure that this war will not be followed by another war 25 years from now.

Declaring that labor has a right to speak upon this subject because working people from the cities and farms are bearing the brunt of the fighting, Mr. Meany said: and I quote:

"An enduring peace cannot be achieved and maintained except through international co-operation. We approve such co-operation and we call upon our Government to join with other nations of goodwill so that, if any future Hitler should raise his head after peace comes, there will be machinery at hand to make it ^{im}possible for him to plunge the world into war."

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It is not too soon, Mr. Meany continued, to discuss practical solutions to postwar problems. He asserted that failure to blueprint such plans in the last war paved the way to unemployment. The AFL's program, he said, calls for a "fair deal" and jobs for demobilized servicemen, and new work for the millions of Americans now in war plants.

Mr. Meany scoffed at the theory that a postwar depression is inevitable, pointing out that there will be a great demand for consumer goods and need for housing. Private industry, he said, must provide the majority of jobs after the war, but the Government must also play a part.

The government, Mr. Meany said, in the first place, has the responsibility of encouraging industrial expansion. The American Federation of Labor holds that the Government should not only permit, but stimulate, opportunities to make a reasonable and fair profit. An enterprise which makes a profit is willing to expand. Expansion spells more jobs, and that is what labor will want.

This statement by Mr. Meany is a ~~xx~~ highlight of the week's news.

As a leading spokesman in the ranks of organized labor he has reasserted labor's insistence upon America's participation in post-war international cooperation and an aggressive program of cooperation between industry and government in attacking the problem of full employment and production in a peace-time economy.

~~William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in his recent address to the House of Representatives, said that the cost of living has risen 50 per cent since 1939 and that the average factory wage rate has been virtually frozen since October 1942, almost one year.~~

The rising cost of living has commanded front-page news all during the past week. In a news dispatch from Washington the chairman of the house agriculture committee blames "money-mad middleman making war profits up to 500 per cent for food shortages and rising prices."

Chairman Hampton P. Fulmer disclosed plans for a subcommittee to investigate the "ever-widening gap" between prices ~~xxx~~ paid ~~f~~ the farmer and the ultimate cost to the consumer. He cited OPA statistics to show that a majority of large wholesalers received at least 100 per cent greater profits in 1942 than in 1939 and that one-fifth of all wholesalers had profits of 500 per cent or more.

"Farmers and consumers," said Fulmer, "operate as individuals and are absolutely at the mercy of those operating between them. Farm prices are being depressed at will by speculation and otherwise.

"On the other hand, Fulmer continued, consumers are called upon to pay unfair increases to obtain necessary food because the supply has fallen far behind demand and price fixing has been ineffective."

~~But~~ Mr. Fulmer's statement about the rising cost of living is given additional emphasis by a release from the War Labor Board, ~~to~~ Dr. George W. Taylor, vice chairman and wage expert for the board, ~~who~~ made the disclosure that the average factory wage rate has been virtually frozen since October 1942, almost one year.

In fact, ~~By~~ Dr. Taylor said, wage rates have increased less than one cent an hour during the first eight months of the stabilization program. In contrast, food prices have gone up 10 cents on the dollar.

The bureau of labor statistics has recently pointed out that wage earners in large cities are estimated to spend approximately 42 per cent of their income for food, whereas in 1939 they spent only 33 per cent of their wages for food products. This information should make us aware of the immediate necessity of the frontal attack upon the rising cost of living. That the ~~an~~ rise in cost of living can be checked has been proved by our sister nation, ~~and~~ Canada, in its program of rationing and price control. The British have likewise done a better job at it than we here in America. Apparently it has not been driven home to us that there is no compromise with inflation. Appeasement here is ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ as disastrous as a Munich agreement with Hitler. As yet ~~the~~ Congress has not enacted an adequate tax program to absorb the excess purchasing power, the Office of Price Administration has not rigidly maintained the ~~the~~ safeguards to protect the consumer. The promise to roll back prices to September 1942 levels has not been aggressively acted upon. The entire LittleSteel formula of the War Labor Board is jeopardized unless there is immediate action to stabilize living costs and to roll back prices of food commodities. It is interesting to note a recent report published by the OPA. Generally speaking the report shows a good record for price regulation with the single exception of food. Food prices accounted for 7/8ths of the rise in the first year of retail price control. However, food commodities which were under price ceilings at the beginning of the year advanced only 4 and 1/10 per cent. Foods not controlled by price ceilings advanced 74 and 7/10 per cent.

It is reported that price ceilings are being violated widely, but

even this situation is not hopeless. When 250,000 housewives in New Orleans sign personal pledges to avoid black markets and pay only ceiling prices food prices almost overnight went down 5 per cent. Similar pledges will be asked throughout the whole country. Here is an opportunity for Minneapolis labor to actively cooperate with the Civilian Defense and price administration officials in a frontal attack upon the rising cost of living.

Labor is doing its job in production. Minneapolis labor is to be commended upon its fine work in civilian defense, and ~~its~~ its extensive participation in every war service activity. It has ~~actively~~ actively ~~participated~~ participated in the blood donor drive for the American Red Cross. It has given its whole-hearted cooperation to the Clothing for Russia Drive. It has assumed ~~a~~ major responsibility for the sale and purchase of war bonds among workers. James Landis, director of the Office of Civilian Defense, recently remarked "The cities and towns which have launched the most successful attacks upon their war-time problems have been those which gave to organized labor a useful place in the top councils of their defense organizations." Americans agree that labor has done its job in the winning of the war. It is imperative that labor also give immediate attention to the economic and political issues arising out of war mobilization and the more difficult problems of the post-war demobilization. On this Labor Day American workers are rightly asking government ~~to make plans for assuring security to the aged and the jobless and the turning of war plants into the production of civilian goods~~ to adhere to the ~~primary~~ demand of unconditional surrender, to push vigorously the battle against inflation, to require equality of sacrifice, to check exorbitant profits, and to plan intelligently for the post-war.

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~~William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in the same positive spirit. Mr. William Green, president of the AFL, last week set forth a definite program as labor's specific objectives, and~~

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