

A Ten Billion Dollar Federal Housing Program Would Provide Jobs For All

THE NORTHWEST ORGANIZER

Official Organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council

MINNEAPOLIS OFFICE: 257 PLYMOUTH AVE. N.

As from this hour You use your power, The World must follow you

Stand all as one Till right is done! Believe and dare and do!

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1940

FIVE CENTS

On the National Picket Line

Marvel Scholl

Last week we talked about the government's drive to smash the labor movement. This week let us talk briefly about a program of action under which Labor can fight against its oppressors, and fighting, WIN THE BATTLE.

First—We must have the unification of the organized movement. Too long have we been separated into two warring camps to satisfy the whims and ambitions of a few selfish old men.

Second—We must have close unity and harmony between the employed and the unemployed. We are both fighting the same enemy. Every worker is a potential member of the great army of the unemployed. And every unemployed worker, left too long in his starvation, is a potential member of a great reservoir of labor which Big Business is trying to build to break the back of the organized labor movement.

And third—We must have an independent political party, completely divorced from the two boss parties; a party which will be Labor's own, its voice and instrument with which to carry the fight to its logical conclusion—political and economical control by the producing classes.

A classic example of the kind of politician which labor has had foisted upon it through the years is Mayor La Guardia of New York City. He was elected as "labor's friend." He has now cast aside his smiling mask and is showing his real character in his treatment of the twenty-one thousand transport workers in New York City.

Recently the City Fathers purchased from the houses of Rockefeller and Morgan, the two great transport lines, the IRT and the BMT. On May 1, the city will take control. Three of the biggest elevated systems will immediately be wrecked, throwing more than 3,000 men out of work. The Wall Street bankers will profit three ways by the transaction. They will net millions from the sale, they will retain much of the stock, and their property, adjacent to the three wrecked elevs, will be greatly enhanced in value. In addition La Guardia has taken it upon himself to assist Big Business in its union-wrecking campaign by announcing that he will abrogate the present closed shop contract between the IRT, the BMT and the Transport Workers Union.

La Guardia has announced that once he is in control he will—

1. abolish the closed shop.
2. abolish the workers' right to strike against the city government.
3. "treat organized and unorganized workers alike."
4. put the 3,000 displaced workers on the Civil Service waiting list.

The twenty-one thousand transport workers who make up the Transport Workers Union (CIO) didn't like the Little Flower's mandate. On Monday, March 18, they voted almost unanimously to strike if he attempts to put them into effect.

On the same day, responding to the tremendous pressure of both the strike vote and aroused public sentiment, the Mayor agreed to meet with the union committee to discuss their demands. John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, and Michael Quill went into conference

One of the Minneapolis "Okies" Living Under the Camden Bridge



Above is Roy E. Soward, war veteran, who lives with his wife and mother in a tent under the Camden bridge along the Mississippi river in North Minneapolis. The Soward family is one of about fifty squatter families living on city property there. A few live in tents, others in homemade shacks or trailers. The more fortunate families have someone on WPA. The others get along as best they can, rummaging in nearby dumps for saleable parts of old cars, or doing handicraft work.

Water comes from a nearby spring. A sewer runs beneath the camp. There is no electricity or gas, and the "houses" aren't numbered.

Soward, shown above, gets coal now and then from a veterans' organization. "Our place really isn't as bad as it looks," he said. "We're located right under the bridge, which makes it warmer. We have a sand floor with linoleum on it, and a coal stove. The tent is banked on the outside. We're really not bad off."

Mrs. Soward echoed her husband's sentiments. "We really keep quite warm here. Why the day it was 22 below, our goldfish didn't even freeze in his bowl."

Mr. Nelson Shepherd, his wife and two small daughters, live in a shack about eight feet square above the Soward place.

These homeless Minneapolis "Okies" believe a large-scale federal housing program would be a fine thing. But until such a program goes into effect, they want to be let alone. There has been some talk by business men and tenement owners of forcing the Camden squatters to move off the city property. These families don't want to move, feeling that whatever change is enforced will only make matters worse.

The shacks only cost them the boards to build with. The dirt used to bank out the cold is free. This leaves more money for food.

Laundry Drivers Agree To New Meetings With Twin City Employers

Following a brief extension of the strike deadline, negotiations between the Joint Laundry Drivers Union Committee and the Minneapolis laundry bosses were resumed Tuesday afternoon. That morning the employers had submitted a counter-offer which failed in all respects to meet the demands of Local 131.

By agreement with both sides, the state conciliator, Mr. Anderson, dropped out of the negotiations on Tuesday. After some discussion Tuesday afternoon, it was agreed to meet against Wednesday afternoon with a group of the Minneapolis employers.

Another meeting between the Union Negotiating Committee and the St. Paul employers has been set for Friday morning at 10 o'clock.

Upon the outcome of the scheduled meetings will determine the action to be taken by the Minneapolis and St. Paul Laundry Drivers Unions.

800,000 WPA Workers Face The Ax

"About a third of the nation's WPA workers will be dismissed by June 30th of this year," Howard Hunter, deputy WPA commissioner, stated in Kansas City last Friday. Over 700,000 persons would be cut from the total of 2,300,000, beginning with 200,000 during April, with sharper cuts thereafter. The rolls will be reduced to about 1,500,000 by the end of the present fiscal year.

WPA officials in Washington state the cut is necessary "to keep WPA within the Congressional appropriation of \$1,477,000,000 for the current fiscal year." That is all that Roosevelt asked for relief last year. In January Roosevelt asked for only \$1,000,000,000 for the coming year. Hunter said "this would mean a wholesale layoff of WPA workers and discontinuance of the last worthwhile projects."

Nobody has stated how the laid-off WPA workers are going to live. Certainly there are no jobs for them in private industry.

F-L Veterans Protest WPA Lay-Offs

A resolution protesting to President Roosevelt and WPA administrators against the proposed lay-off of 238,000 WPA workers on April 1 was adopted by the executive committee of the Veterans Farmer-Labor club at its meeting held last Sunday, March 17th.

The resolution warns that "if this contemplated lay-off is consummated, it will not only deprive thousands of war veterans and their dependents of their mere security, but in doing so, untold suffering will be entailed and visited upon those who served their country well in time of stress, who now, on account of advancing age, are not welcomed in private employment, even if such could be obtained."

Nash Finch Strikers Dig In

Ottumwa, Iowa—Rejecting the unsatisfactory proposal of the Nash Finch company to end the long strike of its drivers, the Ottumwa Teamsters Union is digging in to continue the fight until a complete victory is won.

The company's offer, made two weeks ago, contained some points acceptable to the union, but was unsatisfactory on the all-important points of wages, hours and job security. The seniority clause offered contained so many qualifications as to be meaningless.

Ottumwa strikers were cheered to learn that the Drivers Union in Grand Island, Nebraska, has won a signed agreement from Nash Finch calling for wage increases, sick benefits, vacations, time and one-half for overtime, etc.

The Ottumwa Trades & Labor Assembly has endorsed the Ottumwa Organizer being published by the Teamsters Union Local 388.

The Ottumwa Trades & Labor Assembly has also gone on record in a resolution demanding of President Roosevelt that he grant executive clemency to all imprisoned WPA strikers from Minneapolis.

The resolution censures "the action of the Department of Justice for the prosecution of these unfortunate victims of circumstances," and states the belief that the strike prisoners "are guilty of nothing except an attempt to defend their rights as American citizens, by the only means at their disposal, to a minimum standard of existence."

70% of Youth To Be Workers

"Seventy per cent of the boys and girls who go to high school are destined to become manual workers," Floyd W. Reeves, director of the American Youth Commission, told a conference in the nation's capitol last week.

The Commission is planning to overhaul the school system, which now produces too many white collar workers.

That large proportion of American youth who has not yet seen that its interests lie with the working class might well take Reeves' statement to heart. It is true that in the United States today the youth can rise only as the working class itself rises.

Food Workers Union Dance Friday Evening

The Food & Candy Workers Union Local 21920 will hold a dance this Friday, March 29th, 8 p. m. at St. Joe's Athletic Club, Fifth street and 12th avenue N. A number of prizes are available. Tickets are only 25c and all unionists are cordially invited to attend.

FWS Petitions Demand Pardon For WPA Strikers

Local 544's Federal Workers Section circulated petitions among the unemployed and WPA workers this week calling upon President Roosevelt to grant executive clemency to the 14 Minneapolis WPA strikers now imprisoned.

Hundreds of relief workers have signed the petitions, which will shortly be forwarded to the White House.

Addressed "to the President of the United States, the petitions read: We, the undersigned WPA workers, persons on relief and the unemployed of the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, hereby respectfully urge the granting of Executive Clemency to the 14 persons involved in the Minneapolis WPA strike cases."

CLU Sponsors Meeting on Man's Rights

A mass meeting on human relations, sponsored by the Anti-Fascist Committee of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union, will be held next Thursday, April 4th, 8 p. m. in the old East High auditorium, 4th street and Central avenue S. E. Thomas Pierce of the Building Service Employees Union Local 26, is chairman of the Anti-Fascist Committee. John Boscoe, president of the Central Labor Union, will preside.

The meeting is being held in cooperation with the Minneapolis Round Table of Christians and Jews. The program will include movie shorts, an invocation by the Rev. Wendell, and talks by Paul Dobson, Robley Cramer of the Labor Review, the Rev. C. P. Deems, Rabbi Albert Gordon, the Rev. Francis Gilligan, and Dr. Everett R. Clinchy.

Inasmuch as the mass meeting will be held in the building which is being considered as a possible Minneapolis Labor Temple, many unionists are expected to use the opportunity to look over the structure and gauge its possibilities as a Labor Temple.

Alumni Club of Labor School to Sponsor Dance

The Students Alumni Club of the Minneapolis labor school will hold its annual dance Friday, March 29th, at 19 South 7th Street, above the Nankin cafe.

Tickets are only 25c and union members and friends are promised at least two dollars worth of entertainment—dancing, cards, refreshments and prizes.

John Geary Is Feted for 40 Years' Service to IBT

John Geary, the "Grand Old Man" of the teamsters movement in the Northwest, was honored with a testimonial banquet Tuesday night tendered by the St. Paul Teamsters Joint Council No. 34. The occasion was Brother Geary's fortieth year of membership in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, of which he is fourth vice-president.

Over one hundred guests attended the banquet which was held in the Hotel St. Paul. Among the speakers who paid tribute to Mr. Geary's unflinching devotion to the cause of the teamsters and of organized labor were Ray Wentz, representative of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly; Robert Olson, president of the State Federation of Labor; Harold Seavey, chairman of the Minneapolis Teamsters Council; A. J. Mitchell, chairman of the St. Paul Teamsters Council; Art Hudson, chairman of the St. Paul Drivers Union Local 120; William Wright, AFL organizer; A. F. Lockhart, editor of the Union Advocate, and others.

Thomas B. Hughes, secretary-treasurer of the International

NSP Hearing Will Close This Week

Oine Affidavit to Union is Disputed

Because the affidavit of Edward Oine that he was hired by Frank J. Miller, personnel director of the Northern States Power company, to beat up William J. Heigel, business agent of Local 160, has been the subject of debate at the present hearing in the dispute between the Utility Workers Unions and the NSP company, we are reprinting Oine's affidavit just as it appeared in the Northwest Organizer on May 12, 1938.

544 Suit to Be Resumed This Friday

The book suit against the General Drivers Union will be resumed Friday morning, March 29th, in Judge Carroll's courtroom. Originally scheduled to resume Tuesday, the hearings were postponed until Friday because Judge Carroll was involved in other court work. John Goldie, one of Local 544's attorneys, was also occupied with the Utility Workers Union hearing concerning the Northern States Power company.

The final chapter on the series "Behind the 544 Suit" appears on page four. The series of articles on the fine suit will be published soon in pamphlet form.

Vic Nicholas, WPA Defendant, Gets 6 Months

Victor Nicholas, last of the WPA strike defendants, was sentenced Saturday to six months in Sandstone or "a similar institution of correction" by Federal Judge Joyce.

Vic, a FWS steward, was picked up by state authorities as a result of his activities during the strike, and returned to St. Cloud from which he had been released on a commutation of sentence for a previous conviction. It is not known how long he will be incarcerated at St. Cloud, nor when he can begin serving his sentence at Sandstone.

Nicholas was brought down from St. Cloud to hear sentence passed on him by Judge Joyce. Many friends from the Federal Workers Section were present to see him, and were glad to see him looking well.

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Company Rebuttal Fails to Shake Union Charges of Contract Violation—Gleeson Proves Evasive Witness

Oine Disavows Original Affidavit Under Strange Circumstances — "Can't Remember" Facts About Earlier Agreement With Miller

At press time it appeared that the Northern States Power company would finish its rebuttal against the unions' testimony by Wednesday evening, after which the Minneapolis and St. Paul unions will have the opportunity to present to the three man commission an answer to rebuttal testimony. The hearing will probably be over by Thursday, after which the commission will have six days in which to prepare its report to Governor Stassen. What happens after the six-day period is a moot question.

The hearing, which had already continued past the original 30-day period, was adjourned last Thursday while representatives of the commission, the unions and the company went to Chicago to question Edward Oine, former employee of the Northern States Power company, who in the spring of 1938 had presented the union with an affidavit that Miller, company personnel director, had sent him to beat up William Heigel, business agent of the Minneapolis Utility Workers Union Local 160.

A copy of Oine's original affidavit is printed elsewhere in this issue.

After allowing almost two years to pass without denying the contents of Oine's affidavit, the company last week sent an agent of the Burns Detective Agency to Oine in Chicago with the suggestion that Oine refute his earlier affidavit.

Met Miller in 1935

"I started working in the gas station at 36th and Lyndale South in 1932. I worked thirteen months. I was making too much money when the NRA came in so they had to let me go. I was laid off in 1934. I went back to work at the end of 1935 for a measly salary. Miller stopped in to get gas and oil and had work done on his car at this station. I left the station in 1936. This Miller is Frank J. Miller, Director of Personnel at N.S.P. Company today.

Miller's Proposal

"June 21st, 1937, I went to work for the Northern States Power Company through the incident of meeting Miller and Gleeson at the Harbor Bar. Miller introduced me to Gleeson with the comment that he could use me. Gleeson said to come down to see him for a job which I did three or four days later, and he put me on in the Overhead Department. I worked in the Overhead Department all of that summer until December 1st when I was laid off. During the period I worked I never saw Miller. Miller said he wanted to talk to me. He said, "Have you ever done anything that is real hard?" I said, "Yes." He said, "So I have heard." I said, "How?" He didn't tell me. He said, "I can use you if you want to make some money." I said, "Do I want to make some money?" He said, "I am going over the telephone book here. There is a name here of a man I want you to see. (The name was Mr. Heigel up by Camden.) I want you to go and treat him rough." I asked, "What do you mean, kill him?" He said, "No, but I want you to go up and knock the s--- out of him. The better job you do the more money you get."

Visits Heigel

"That night I went up with a taxicab driver. I can give you the name of the taxicab driver if you need it—any time you want it. He pulled around the corner and put his lights out. I walked back to the house. I wanted to see Heigel and tell him the whole story. I wouldn't have told Bill Heigel's wife that I worked in the Overhead Department if I meant to pull the job. I knocked at the door and said, "Is Mr. Heigel in? I would like to talk to Mr. Heigel. I work in the Overhead Department." I left because Mr. Heigel wasn't home. Walked down the steps and around the corner and into the cab and went home. This

Company Rebuttal Weak

Monday morning the company's rebuttal of previous union testimony got under way, with the chambers in the state capital

Make Minneapolis a Union Town

