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Organized Labor's Program Of Legislation Fares Poorly

Washington — (CQ) — Organized labor's legislative program has done poorly in the 86th Congress, a survey by Congressional Quarterly shows. To make things worse, Congress hit labor last year with what it calls the "punitive" Landrum-Griffin labor reform bill.

This record certainly did not live up to labor's high hopes for the heavily Democratic Congress elected Nov. 4, 1958. The "liberals" were thought to be in control then and expected to favor labor's program.

The CQ survey covers major AFL-CIO legislative requests over the past two years on "bread and butter" issues—issues directly affecting unions and working people. It shows favorable action on fewer than 10 per cent of labor's requests, although final enactment of pending minimum wage increase and health-benefits-for-the-aged bills could raise the figure before Congress closes shop for 1960.

Of 76 major requests selected, only seven were sent to the White House, and two of these, the depressed areas bill and a measure relieving Government drivers of personal liability in accidents, were vetoed by President Eisenhower.

Successful Requests

Among the five requests that did get past both Congress and the President were measures boosting railroad workers' retirement and unemployment benefits, setting up partial Government financing for health insurance plans for federal employees, and raising the pay of 1.6 million federal and postal workers 7½ per cent. Congress had to override a Presidential veto to pass the pay-raise bill.

Also enacted, as part of the 1959 labor reform bill, were two changes in labor-management relations law strongly desired by the unions. One permitted certain types of union-shop contracts to be concluded in the construction industry in advance of the beginning of a job, without requiring a National Labor Relations board representation election to be held first.

The other, supported by the President, eased what unions had labeled as a union-busting device in the Taft-Hartley Act. It permitted men who went on strike and then were replaced by their employers to vote in NLRB representation elections held within a year of the beginning of the strike. The aim was to prevent from breaking unions by replacing strikers with men they knew opposed unions, and then calling for a new NLRB representation election with the argument that the employees no longer wanted to be represented by the union.

Labor Defeats

The list of union defeats, however, was far longer than the list of victories. In 1959, unions suffered what they

themselves called their worst legislative setback since the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. That was passage of the Landrum-Griffin labor reform bill, which unions said was "punitive" and favorable to management. The bill curbed organizational and recognition picketing and outlawed consumer-boycott picketing. Unions claimed these provisions blocked their attempts to organize workers and to advertise their grievances to the public.

The bill also closed up some "loopholes" in laws against secondary boycotts, outlawed "hot cargo" contracts by which an employer agrees in advance not to do business with another firm his union considers unfair to labor, and handed over certain types of labor disputes to the state courts, which have broad powers to impose injunctions.

On other major AFL-CIO proposals, Congress took no action. Among these were requests to boost unemployment and set minimum standards for them, to improve workmen's compensation, to give farm workers the protection of federal labor laws, to outlaw state laws banning the union shop, and pass a federal fair employment practice law. Also ignored was a request for substantial increases in Social Security pensions.

Hopes in 1958

This meager action on labor's program was not foreseen in 1958, when the heavily Democratic 86th Congress

was elected. Quick action was anticipated on the labor program by a Congress the AFL-CIO expected to be "liberal and progressive." But things have not worked out that way.

Labor's disappointment could be considerably assuaged, however, if a health-benefits-for-the-aged bill, a \$1.25 an hour minimum-wage bill, and a bill to permit union picketing at joint construction sites were passed before the 86th Congress went home. But the picketing bill appears permanently pigeonholed in the they might be vetoed by the president.

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MORE PLASTICS

Washington — (Science Service) — Present building codes permit the use of more plastics than are now used in building construction, a survey by the Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas, has shown. As the basis for a study of the relative fire-safety of plastic building products, the institute tabulated permissible uses of such components under major model codes today. This information was contrasted with tabulations of the far fewer uses to which plastic products were found to have actually been put in representative buildings of recent construction.

'Velocitization Virus' Discussed by Police

Drivers who glance down at the speedometer and find they are driving 10 to 15 miles faster than they thought may be suffering from "velocitization virus," according to Charles P. Champlin, Medford police chief.

Such occurrences are not uncommon to most drivers, since there is a tendency for drivers to lose touch with the speed at which they are traveling, the chief added.

Scientific studies have shown that over a long period of time, drivers tend to increase their speeds without realizing it. The longer a vehicle is in motion, the more accustomed the driver becomes to the speed at which he is moving.

To keep up the feeling of movement, he begins unconsciously to increase his speed until he is soon traveling faster than he should or really wants to, Champlin continued.

"The disease" is most noticeable when the driver has to slow down, he pointed out. Soon the driver feels as though he is barely moving, yet he finds that he is still going 5, 10, or 15 miles an hour above the designated speed.

Champlin noted that this is becoming an increasingly ap-

parent enforcement problem when drivers travel into cities after many miles of freeway driving speeds.

"One sure way to immunize yourself against the virus," the chief said, "is to check the speedometer frequently."

Persistent Robber

Bothers Merchant

Watertown, N.Y. — Market operator Sam Muller doesn't like to be robbed—particularly when it's done three times by the same robber.

"The gall of that guy," said Muller. "He entered my store again, pulled the same gun and said: 'C'mon now, Sam, give me the money.'"

Muller winced: "At least, the first two times he didn't call me Sam."

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