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Non-Partisan State News Letter

The conclusion of several commentaries at Lansing is that Governor Murphy has swapped issues in getting the legislature to pass a civil service bill and in setting his own labor relations bill. Whereas labor relations might easily become a liability to the administration that carries favor with labor unions, because of the picketing restrictions in the bill, civil service is a non-partisan cause that resembles with governmental righteousness.

At least, such is one interpretation that is being given here. In the meanwhile, the governor's strategy for 1938 is becoming more apparent. He seeks to put the republican senate on the defensive. He plans to keep the legislature on the job, wear down the leaders' resistance as he did in labor mediation efforts, and get them to pass new bills.

Cards in the deck of his "New Deal" for Michigan include rural electrification, a bid for farm votes; teachers' tenure fund; lower minimum hours for women in industry; and central finance control "to balance the budget."

Some sort of a state NRA plan for industry and business, giving to intrastate commerce what the federal hour-wage act would do for interstate commerce, is far from being unlikely for the future.

**G. O. P. Campaign**

A rally in Bay City the middle of September will mark the opening of the republican campaign for the 1938 elections. Governor Murphy's attitude on labor matters, regarded to be vacillating by republican critics, has led to a

feeling that the 1937 minority party has a chance in 1938 to effect a comeback in popular favor. Local favorites are being groomed for the gubernatorial nomination. Republican leaders expect that Murphy will run for re-election. But if the governor's administration would be drastically changed, as the logical candidate in Michigan would probably be Murray D. Van Wagoner, state highway commissioner, Van Wagoner's designation as an off-election year, running for the presidency. Holding a liberal banner with an eye for industrial votes, Fitzgerald last week endorsed the Wagner-Stegall low-cost housing bill with this indictment: "We face the inescapable fact that our present economic system has failed to provide decent homes for many thousands of deserving, industrious citizens."

**Unemployment Compensation**  
The houseback which resulted from the governor's veto of his own labor relations act—a re-deduction of the state's unemployment compensation fund—has had something to do with his unexpected signature of the re-deduction of unemployment compensation act.

Frank Picard, chairman of the unemployment insurance commission, had lobbied actively to persuade legislators to put every employee under the wings of the social security benefit. Largely through efforts of republicans in the senate, Picard's program was balked. They wrote features into new amendments which Murphy signed. Picard's program was balked. They wrote features into new amendments which Murphy signed.

Whereas Picard's every employee provision would have brought some \$500 additional persons under the act in industries covered by the state and federal statutes, the new law says that Michigan will go only as far as the federal government is willing to go. In other words, employers who have less than eight employees are exempt from the jobless insurance tax.

The previous exemption has been \$6,000 on every payroll. Picard and Murphy also favored advancing the date for payments of benefits from Jan. 1, 1939—after the fall elections—to July 1, 1938. At the time of the legislative attempt will be made, the governor announced as he signed the act, to amend the law.

**Liquor by the Glass**  
There is one issue that, like the poor, is always with us. What to do about liquor has always been a social problem, and today is no exception.

Seeking a source for additional state income, the legislature authorized the state liquor control commission to increase public prices 15 per cent. The increased funds were to be spent in providing needed hospital facilities. The legislature also put its stamp of respect on the old-fashioned saloon by permitting the bar to return. Paradoxically, it restricted drinking to persons of 21 years or more in age.

At a national liquor control conference at Mackinac Island, Governor Murphy deplored a tendency to exploit liquor in order to get more taxes. Public morality must come first, he declared.

Then came Edward McFarland, commission chairman, with the declaration at Ishpeming that Michigan has too many drinking places and that prices should be reduced so that saloon keepers could compete with bootleggers.

Of direct interest to local communities is the fact that the legislative body of each municipality must declare before September 15 whether they want liquor by the glass within their jurisdictions. Model resolutions are being sent to each town and city by the state commission. If cities fail to act and citizens do not effect a referendum, all present liquor-by-the-glass places will continue until May 1, 1938 when licenses will be cancelled and no new ones will be issued.

The wet-dry battle is on again.

**Gambling Again**  
By a surprise drastic order of the state liquor control commission, the slot machine racket was put on the run in Michigan. The commission issued an order making operation of a slot machine in an establishment serving a facit proof for revocation of a liquor license. Coming as it did right in the midst of a summer tourist season, the prohibition caused consternation in many sections.

Simultaneously, the house of representatives, prodded by Rep. Elton Eaton, crusading editor at Plymouth, authorized a legislative investigation of gambling conditions in Michigan. Rep. John Hamilton and Rep. Chester Fitzgerald, democrat of Detroit, and Rep. Carl Delano, republican of Kalamazoo, were appointed by Speaker George Schroeder to corral some evidence.

It was Hamilton who campaigned in vain for the licensing of gambling. And it has been Hamilton who has been an outspoken critic of Governor Murphy for "changing his mind" on labor matters.

It will be interesting to observe what becomes of the latest crusade against gambling which has been, too often, either a political football or a jacket for campaign expenses.

**BOLT KILLS MULE, BOY UNHURT**

Tupelo, Miss.—Lightning struck and killed the mule on which an 8-year old Negro boy was riding, but the child was not affected in the least.

**NATIONAL NOTES  
ON REAL ESTATE**

By HERBERT U. NELSON

(Secretary, National Association of Real Estate Boards)

(By mail from Paris): Proposal of a new type of institution to meet Europe's need of draining private enterprise back into the field of housing was made at the International Housing and Town Planning Congress, convened in Paris and just closed. The institution, in a way that would justify its encouragement as a part of national policy.

Rents paid by workers was a principal topic of the Congress. About half of the workers in European cities live in units consisting of one room and a kitchen. The overcrowding is tragic, large numbers being compelled to live five persons to a room. For these accommodations a worker's family pays rent amounting to from 15 to 20% of his wages. France shows the lowest percentage, 8%. With workers' wages everywhere very low, the rents they can pay are not sufficient to justify private enterprise in undertaking new building. Due to the continuing scarcity of low rent housing in all European countries since the war, the law of landlord and tenant is gradually undergoing modifications. Owners of buildings are being more and more restricted. It is recognized that if this trend continues the state will ultimately have the whole job of housing the masses.

Thought is therefore being given to assisting private enterprise through low interest rates and tax exemptions, so that it can function again.

F. C. Boldsen of Denmark pointed out that housing enterprises are so small that their shares cannot be dealt in on the stock exchanges and that therefore housing change is byronically "frozen." He suggested the creation of very large stock companies to buy, build, own and operate

housing facilities. Such companies should not be permitted to mortgage their properties. They would in effect be housing investment trusts selling beneficial shares. Mr. Boldsen believes that such enterprises and receipts are more stable in the housing field than in most other important fields of business, and that therefore such shares could become very attractive as conservative, long-term investments. He points out also that in a period of great social and economic change such investment would probably receive better governmental protection than any other kind. One such company has been organized in Copenhagen.

There seems no good reason why large investment trusts could not operate successfully in the housing field in our own country if they could diversify their properties and not be confined solely to the lowest cost facilities.

Public health problems were reviewed by the mayors and public officials who took part in the International Housing Congress. The smoke nuisance came in for special attention. New technical and chemical devices for controlling or eliminating smoke have made progress in European cities the last few years and they can teach our officials something in this field.

Delegates to the Congress visited housing developments near Paris built by the municipality. A typical one of these about five miles out consists of 2,000 family units in large buildings of from 4 to 9 stories. It was somewhat curious to see these high buildings out in the country fields. It was explained to us that the Parisians have always lived in flats and preferred them. Among the visitors there was some feeling that such preferences might have been followed not quite so strenuously and that persuasion might not have been as easy for Parisian working families willing to live in the country to try a cottage for a change.

**LEGLESS BEGGAR HAS \$1,452**  
St. Louis.—Arrested for creating a disturbance in the Union Station, John Christ, 40, a legless beggar, was taken to the police station where it was found that he was carrying \$1,452 in bills in a small leather pouch strapped under one arm.

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