

PRESS RELEASE--From
WASHINGTON STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR
E. M. WESTON, President
2800-First Avenue, Seattle 1, Wash.

January 17, 1947

E. M. WESTON STATES HIS POSITION
ON QUESTION OF PORTAL-TO-PORTAL
PAY SUITS

E. M. Weston, President of the Washington State Federation of Labor, issued the following statement today on the question of portal-to-portal pay suits now sweeping the country.

"Such actions on the part of some unions," stated Weston, "stands to jeopardize the whole structure of collective bargaining. I am not opposed to portal-to-portal pay provided it is negotiated and is a part of an agreement arrived at by collective bargaining, but most certainly it should not be demanded retroactively as far as the statute of limitations will permit, when it was not a part of a previous or existing agreement.

"Unions which take their claims into the courts on this question, or any other similar question, without first attempting to negotiate direct with their employers, are taking steps which might ultimately result in Labor's being placed in the position of accepting a principle which would take away their most cherished right—that of collective bargaining without outside interference.

"If a union," continued Weston, "wants portal-to-portal pay--shop-to-shop pay, as we used to call it—it should make it a part of the union's demand during negotiations.

"Suits now filed, which have risen to astronomical figures, could well destroy the stability of large segments of our economy. We could well expect an end to uniformity of wages and hours, if we are to fall back on the courts for intervention and decision on such matters.

"The American Federation of Labor welcomed the end to the multitude of war-time controls, of government orders, edicts, directives and executive orders, and asked for the return of free collective bargaining. However, no sooner had some of these restrictions been relaxed, than certain segments of labor began clamoring for outside interference—virtually inviting the invasion of the rights of labor and management.

"Aside from these aspects inherent in this issue, practical people must admit that a multitude of firms and businesses would be bankrupt if they were directed to make retribution within the statute of limitation applying in the various states."

PRESS RELEASE--From
WASHINGTON STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR
E. M. WESTON, President
2800-First Avenue, Seattle 1, Wash.

January 17, 1947

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF E. M. WESTON,
PRESIDENT OF WASHINGTON STATE FEDERATION
OF LABOR

NOTE: To the Editor--The Washington State Federation of Labor, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, represents over 300,000 workers in the State of Washington.

The president and full-time executive officer is Evan (Ed) M. Weston. Mr. Weston was elected president of the Federation on December 1, 1945; and during his term, due to a sound policy of labor relations, has become recognized as one of the foremost labor figures in the State.

The State Federation during the first months of Mr. Weston's leadership, has inaugurated a number of public relation medias--one being frequent press releases; which are of general and timely interest to the citizens of the State. We are, at this time, expanding this press service to reach simultaneously every paper in the State, and the Washington State Federation of Labor would be pleased to be placed on your exchange mailing list.

In order that the general public may have some knowledge of Washington's "first labor citizen," we are furnishing herewith a brief biographical sketch of Mr. Weston. From time to time we will release articles of interest on the structure of the Federation, its aims, objects and purpose, and accomplishments, in addition to general labor news.

A part of this release contains a statement of President Weston on the question of portal-to-portal pay.

E. M. Weston, President of the Washington State Federation of Labor, was born in Kangley, Washington, in 1895, the son of Daniel and Elizabeth Weston. Daniel Weston engaged in coal mining and reared a family of seven boys and four girls in Black Diamond. He figured prominently in the organization of the United Mine Workers of America in 1907, and served as an officer of Local No. 2257 for many years. He worked untiringly for industrial insurance, workmen's compensation legislation and all measures of benefit to those who work.

Because of the many abuses and hardships heaped upon the miners and their families by the mine owners, Ed Weston, in 1910, left school against his parents' advice and sought work in the coal bunkers as a screener boy and joined the Miners Union.

Soon awakening to the value of an education, arrangements were made for attendance at night school while working the day shift, and at day school while on the night shift.

Ed left the mines in 1916; then he worked in Seattle until the latter part of 1917 at longshoring, building construction, etc.—always taking an interest in the organization of workers.

In November, 1917, he joined the Boilermakers Local No. 104 of Seattle, when he started to work in the shipyards, and continued through World War I. From 1920 to the latter part of 1926, because of the slump in shipbuilding and repairs, he worked on line work and on building construction, then returned to shipbuilding. In 1928 he was elected Business Agent of Boilermakers Local No. 104.

Since 1928 he served as Business Agent of Boilermakers Local 104 for nine years, Secretary of the Seattle Metal Trades Council for five years, President of the Boilermakers between 1937 and 1941, as a member of the Seattle Central Labor Council Executive Board approximately six years, delegate to the Seattle Building Trades Council, member of the executive board of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific while they were affiliated with the A.F.L.

At the time the American Federation of Labor membership elected Mr. Weston to head the State Federation, in December-1945, he was serving as President of the Pacific Coast District Metal Trades Council which embraced 500,000 metal tradesmen up and down the Pacific Coast.

The "Master Agreement" covering the West Coast shipyard workers was brought about under the guidance and chairmanship of Weston. In negotiating the agreement, Weston proved himself a match for the government representatives and industrial lawyers, and the Agreement was hailed as the best in the land—providing for wages, hours and working conditions for the West Coast workers which were above those in the rest of the land. Out of these negotiations he won the respect of government and industrialists alike.

Weston's contest for the Presidency of the Washington State Federation of Labor proved to be one of the most spirited in the history of the Federation, but when the votes were counted, Weston had been elected by a referendum vote of the membership by a two-to-one majority.

In July-1946, the Forty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Washington State Federation of Labor was held in Spokane, Washington; and Weston reported almost a 50% increase in the number of affiliated organizations, bringing the total from 388 on December 1, 1945, to 575 at the time of the convention. Since then the membership is now close to 625. This represented the largest paid-up membership in the Federation's history.

With the increase in membership and the power that goes with it, Weston has held his head. He believes labor must act with dignity, which its present powerful position warrants.

During his term of office, Weston has thrown the weight of the Federation behind many projects and civic enterprises beneficial to the State of Washington.

Having been forced to quit school at an early age and to complete his education by going to school either day or night, he has a keen, sympathetic view to the problems of education. He is on record as favoring the Federation sponsoring scholarships for worthy boys and girls in the institutions of higher learning, and has brought about an amendment to the State Federation's constitution setting aside certain moneys to be used to promote education within the labor movement.

One year after assuming the office, having behind him a record unmatched in rebuilding and establishing the Washington State Federation of Labor as a constructive force in the community life of our state and a powerful force in the defense and promotion of labor's rights, of building the prestige of the movement; of working quietly behind the scenes unsnarling labor-management problems, attending union gatherings and addressing public meetings, he is today guiding the Federation's legislative program during the Thirtieth Session of the Washington State Legislature.

E. M. Weston, head of the labor movement in the State of Washington by virtue of the popular choice of 90% of the organized workers, the Miner, the Boilermaker is serving the movement into which he was born and reared, serving his State, serving his Nation.