

ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE GRINDS OUT ANTI-LABOR BILLS

Labor Lobbying Proves Next to Worthless

By ARNE SWABECK.

THE Illinois Legislature is about to close a busy session at which it has been grinding out a number of bills favorable to the bosses, turning down those containing points to labor's advantage.

Laws have been enacted giving the Chicago utilities corporation full sway in gobbling up the Chicago transportation system, applying only a few brakes contained in a number of amendments added to the bills as originally proposed. These adopted bills give no regard whatever for the demands of the street car men or elevated employes for improved working conditions. The legislature enacted the law declaring immunity for Governor Small, clearing him of any charges of stealing state funds during the period of his state treasuryship. This was enacted on the basis, however, that the governor returns part of the funds which disappeared at that time. The women's eight hour bill was defeated, the one important bill favorable to labor.

These are but some of the many

examples. The celebrated policy of rewarding friends and punishing enemies as pursued by the trade union officials has once more in practical application brought proof of its criminal futility. The so-called labor friends, as could be expected, failed completely to live up to their distinction. On the issues raised they showed themselves as legislators chosen by the parties controlled by capitalism, elected on their ticket and with the help of their slush funds.

What Did Labor Lobby Accomplish?

THE Illinois State Federation of Labor is the official political expression of the trade unions in the state, one of its objects being to work for legislation favorable to labor. It uses no other methods than those of lobbying with the legislators seeking favors in this manner. Additional labor lobbying is being maintained by various unions and central labor bodies, but once more these labor lobbys will have no record to show. The methods of labor lobbying can be of value to the workers only when used on a class basis. Only by labor

representatives appearing before legislatures or their sub-committees using it as a forum in which labor's demands are voiced, simultaneously organizing outside parliament the necessary mass pressure through working class propaganda, demonstrations, etc. This, however, is by no means the program of the present labor lobbyists.

PRESIDENT WALKER of the Illinois State Federation of Labor in appearing recently before the Chicago Federation of Labor was compelled to acknowledge the capitalist control of the legislature. He said that efforts made by labor for a more favorable attitude could only be appreciated by those who had been present at the "battle front." By this he evidently referred to the luxurious lobbys in the Springfield capitol. He acknowledged the difficulties encountered by the fact that the law makers in practically all of them were elected by the funds put into the political campaigns by the bankers and big employers. He proposed as his solution to merge yet deeper into capitalist

politics by endeavoring to get control of the ward and precinct captains of the two old political machines.

HOW impossible absurd such a proposal is can easily be understood when we just look back to the 1926 primaries and compare the figures of hundreds of thousands of dollars contributed by the big corporations to the small sums available for labor. What is more important, this would be absolutely contrary to labor's political action which can have its basis only in mass sentiment of the workers, and mass organizations of the workers, not within the capitalist parties.

How Do the Bosses' Politicians Work?

THE capitalist politicians work out a shrewd game of maintaining an appearance of labor friends wherever such distinction is necessary to hold their constituency. Bills favorable to labor are usually held up in committee until the last few days of the session when there is not sufficient

support available for their passage. Those who can best afford to blur their so-called labor friendly record remain absent. When defeat is assured sufficient number of "labor friend" legislators will vote in favor in order to maintain their record. If this method appears uncertain sufficient amendments will be slipped over in order to make these labor friendly bills worthless or else impossible of passage.

ANTI-LABOR bills are generally also rushed through during the last period of the session with the rails greased quietly for quick passage. The so-called labor friends vote against these bills in sufficient number to maintain their record without endangering the victory of the anti-labor bills. This session has become a shining example of such practice. All the proposed bills of any consequence were left to the last few days of the legislative session and then rushed to victory or defeat as the political bosses had decided in advance.