

TWO FAKE INSURANCE BILLS BEFORE N.Y. LEGISLATURE

By I. AMTER.

GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT of New York has the reputation of being a "progressive," a "liberal." He is reported to be in favor of unemployment insurance—but the plan that he supports is that of the General Electric Company, which has already been adopted. This is a complicated form of voluntary insurance on the part of the employer, part of the burden being put on the workers themselves, who insure themselves through the company. Should the number and amount of insurance exceed the amount in the insurance fund, a special tax is put on the workers. This is a smug way of making the workers pay for insurance for unemployment forced on them by the employers.

Two bills are now before the State Legislature, which must be exposed. This is particularly necessary, for one resembles in many particulars that of the socialist party, and because the other has the support of the State Federation of Labor, which did not dare through its delegates at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Boston to stand even for this treacherous piece of business.

Senator Hastings of New York has introduced a bill with the following provisions. The State shall collect data and statistics. Every employer of more than ten workers shall be obliged to insure his workers either in a state or a private insurance fund. Employers of farm labor are exempt from this obligation. Those "in the service of the United States, state or municipal governments" and actors shall not be insured. Seasonal workers shall not be protected by insurance. Insurance shall run for twenty-six weeks only and shall amount to no more than two-thirds of the wages of the workers and not less than \$8 a week.

The shameful and discriminating provisions of the bill are to be noted in the following: Only those workers shall be insured who have been continuously employed for six months by the particular employer; who "did not lose employment through their own misconduct; who did not leave employment voluntarily; who did not leave or lose their employment due to stoppage of work due to a strike or lockout." No premium shall be payable until Jan. 1, 1932 and no claims for compensation shall accrue until July 1, 1932.

Here we have the damnable provisions of the Hastings bill, which agree in many points with the socialist party bill. Thus certain categories of workers are completely eliminated from insurance, such as farm labor, state, municipal and government employes, actors and seasonal workers. They shall receive a maximum of 26 weeks of insurance, provided they have worked for the employer for six months, have not struck against miserable conditions or been discharged for "misconduct," that is organizing the workers in the shop, or even been locked out!

This is a bill directed against the militant workers, the purpose being to prevent strikes against wage cuts, speed-up and rotten conditions. It is a bill to establish penance in the state, on the basis of a bribe in the form of unemployment insurance covering a period of 26 weeks! And it will not go into effect until July, 1932. In the meantime the workers may starve! Thus the socialists and the capitalist Hastings!

Another bill has been introduced in the State Assembly, sponsored by Steingut and represents the point of view of Roosevelt. This bill provides for "at least two days' work per week to be performed in the interest of the state at a minimum (read maximum) wage of five dollars per day." This is work on public works, the advertising, awarding and performance of the work being granted according to the usual conditions.

The following are covered by this insurance

scheme: "Any person who has attained the age of twenty-one years; who is unable to support himself and his family because of forced idleness; is a citizen of the United States and of the State of New York for at least three continuous years immediately preceding his application for relief; is not at the time an inmate of any public institution."

Thus the great bulk of young workers—below 21 years of age, whose number is tremendous and whose wages are miserable; the unnaturalized foreign-born and the large number of migratory and seasonal workers, who are not able to remain in the state or locality for a period, but must move from place to place looking for a job—these workers are barred from insurance.

But this is not the worst feature. Those who will receive insurance will get it in the form of work on public works for two days a week at the rate of \$5 a day. The purpose of this provision is to lower the condition of the building trades workers and all workers generally, for the further provision is made that awards shall be made as hitherto, except as to the scale of wages. This bill is supported by the State Federation of Labor.

Thus these two bills are directed against the bulk of the working class, against the seasonal, migratory and young workers, against the militant workers, against the foreign-born workers.

Against these two bills representing the so-called progressives, the socialists and the American Federation of Labor, the workers put the Workers Insurance Bill, which is to go into effect at once, to cover the workers from the first week of unemployment, without discrimination as to race, age, color, sex, nationality, and to prevail during the entire period of unemployment. In addition, contrary to the above two bills, the workers' unemployment insurance fund is to be administered by a Workers Commission of workers in the shops and unemployed workers so that no discrimination will take place.

The purpose of introducing the above two bills is to offset the fight for the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill. The date for putting into effect is such that the 1,300,000 unemployed workers in New York will starve to death before obtaining any insurance. In the meantime, according to Steingut, Roosevelt and Hastings, they will have to be content with salvation army, police line and bread line charity.

The workers will not accept these conditions, but are fighting for the real insurance provided by the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill, which will be placed before the United States Congress on February 10, backed up by a million signatures and by the militant struggles of the unemployed and employed workers all over the country for immediate unemployment relief and insurance.

Sign the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill! Become a collector of signatures for the Bill! Fight against evictions! Demand immediate relief from the cities! Organize in the fight for Unemployment Insurance!

Roosevelt, the socialist party, State Federation of Labor, Steingut and Hastings, representatives of the capitalists, are carrying on a vicious campaign against the workers who are fighting for relief and insurance. Expose their fraud, as enemies of the workers in the shops and on the land—enemies of the militant, foreign-born and young workers—enemies of the entire working class!

Join the Unemployed Councils! Employed workers, join the unions of the Trade Union Unity League! Together fight for unemployment insurance, against wage cuts, speed-up, worse conditions! Together we will put through our demands!