

Since the passage of the Employment Act, the Federal Government has been dedicated to the promotion of stable, full employment in this Country. It is, in our opinion, inconsistent with this policy to leave the construction industry which, in total, is the largest single employer in America, to experience the wide seasonal swings that have characterized the construction employment for many years. We are nearly the only industrial nation that does not have some form of national program to de-seasonalize employment in the construction industry. Passage of H.R. 15990 will be a first step toward bringing the construction industry into line with the purposes enunciated in the Employment Act and a Federal Program to de-seasonalize employment in the construction industry would, unquestionably, be a significant step toward creating the kind of situation contemplated by Congress with the passage of that Act.

We have already discussed the implications of stabilizing construction employment throughout the year from the point of view of costs and efficiency. At this point, however, I should like to deal with this question in terms of the public policies enunciated by Congress in the manpower field. Stabilizing construction would, without question, stop the tremendous waste of trained and skilled manpower that is now idle during the off-season. In addition, it would make the recruitment of new entrants into the construction industry substantially easier than it is at present, and their retention once recruited more of a certainty.

We have already pointed out that the classification of construction laborer contains a wide range of skills, most of which have traditionally been learned on-the-job as the individual worker gains experience in the industry. Recently, however, it has been found to be practicable to introduce an element of formal training into the construction laborers' craft. Under the Manpower Development and Training Act, our International Union has recently completed a highly successful training program for construction laborers. So enthusiastic was the reception of contractors, members and affiliates of our Union that we now find ourselves bargaining for training funds in many of our local agreements. So, it appears that training programs will now become characteristic of entry into the construction industry at the laborers' level, just as it has been in the crafts. However, our records indicate that problems develop in recruiting high quality trainees into our programs, although young men are attracted by the high hourly rates which they know construction laborers earn, they soon find that the lack of year-round employment nullifies much of the benefit of those rates. If we could find a means to eliminate the seasonal factor in employment for our members, we could assure the industry and the public of a steady flow of high quality skilled workmen into the construction industry. Thus, such a program would not only benefit our people, but would have a major impact on public policy objectives in employment, manpower, civil rights and economic stability.

The Laborers' International Union of North America wants to put on record its unqualified support for H.R. 15990, as well as to urge the Congress to follow through with a full-scale Seasonality Program for the construction industry. For too long, workmen in the construction industry have borne an entirely unnecessary burden of annual unemployment. Equally unnecessary is the burden of higher costs and hidden taxation placed on the American Public. The technology and the capitol needed to eliminate this burden all exist in America. H.R. 15990 is an appropriate first step toward mobilizing these resources for the benefit of all our people.

Mr. FANCHER. Thank you.

I would like to state at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that many of the remarks and perhaps practically all of them of President Murphy would also apply to members of our organization who are the tenders for the brick masons and I was very interested in some of his statements and I do believe that when you get into this subject, as you no doubt have, that it opens many fascinating possibilities, the deeper you go into the subject.

The effects of seasonality on the members of our organization are far greater and far more damaging to their economic well-being than it is to members of other crafts in the construction industry.

Based on our experience with health and welfare programs negotiated by our affiliates, we place our estimate of the average hours worked during the year for all laborers in the industry at about 814