

STATE CONVENTION—MARYLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

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Hagerstown

UNDER legislation sponsored by the Administration, and which I was very happy, by my signature, to enact into law, the cause of labor in the State of Maryland has made a decided advance in the past 29 months.

Not only does Maryland now have the most liberal Unemployment Compensation Law of any state in the Middle Atlantic Area, but, likewise, in the field of compensation for industrial accidents and diseases, the Maryland workman fares decidedly better than in most of the other states in the Country.

As the result of the new legislation which I signed some weeks ago, our State now pays to unemployed workers a minimum of \$7.00 a week, and a maximum of \$17.00 a week, with a general increase in all benefits of about 25%.

Maximum duration of benefits in Maryland is 20 weeks, a period longer than that of any other Middle Atlantic State. The average benefit payment under the new law is approximately \$10.50, as compared with \$8.50 last year. Estimates based on 1940 employment conditions indicate that as a result of this new legislation, payments to Maryland wage earners for unemployment compensation would be increased by approximately \$2,200,000.00.

Among the many betterments that have been achieved in the matter of unemployment compensation is the reduction of waiting period from 2 weeks to 1 week, and lessening the eligibility requirements to earnings of \$150.00 in the base year.

Under the new provision, Maryland workers now may draw a maximum of \$340.00 in a benefit year, an amount larger than is available in the same period in any of the other seven Atlantic Coast States from North Carolina to New York.

As against the \$340.00 maximum in Maryland, the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware, for example, limit such benefits to \$195.00 in a single year, and Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina, while more generous than the above-mentioned states still set a maximum which is exactly \$100.00 below the Maryland figure. Only New Jersey of the Eastern states, with an allowance of \$324.00 per year, comes anywhere near the Maryland figure.

Of definite importance at the moment, too, is the provision now in effect with regard to individuals entering the military service after April 1, 1940, which freezes their benefit credits to make them available later when the individuals are discharged from the Service. In addition, a number of other changes are made, all of which offer increased protection to labor.

In the field of industrial accidents, the greatest importance attaches to the