

## Minimum Prices, Too?

Legislation recently passed by Congress, which became effective January 20th, will have its effect on contract applicators. Under the new law, contractors must also abide by minimum wage, fringe benefit, and working conditions rules set by the Secretary of Labor.

Any CA now servicing federal property, or contracting to do vegetation maintenance and control work at new federal building sites, will fall into this category. This is true, however, only for contracts in excess of \$2,500.

Wage scales will likely be determined by the highest union rate in the area, or lacking that, by the Federal Minimum Wage Law.

Fringe benefits will be set by the Secretary of Labor. Working conditions cannot be dangerous to either the health or safety of employees.

This law also states that contractors must post a notice of compensation required under the law at work sites.

Failure to abide by the wage or fringe benefit laws will make a contractor liable for all payments to employees. Contracting agencies will have the power to either withhold funds due the CA for payment to the employee, or be able to cancel any contract. The government will also be able to bring suit against contractors to recover remaining amounts of underpayment.

The National Labor Relations Board and the

Secretary of Labor will establish provisions which the new Service Contract Act requires. These requirements must be followed and clearly outlined in all new contracts.

Many contract applicators fall under the jurisdiction of the NLRB, and are already required to pay the Federal Minimum Wage. Generally, the NLRB will cover you if you buy or sell goods in excess of \$50,000 per year out of state.

Add these newest requirements for doing business to the higher Social Security taxes, as a result of Medicare, which became effective last month, to the detail required by increased federal and state pesticide use and licensing regulations, and you may wonder when you'll have any time and money to actually get out to do any of the vegetation work all these laws apply to. In addition, of course, the added expense of doing business is either going to come out of profits (if there are any left), or prices must be raised. And yet price cutting still prevails. Wonder if they'll ever get around to establishing minimum prices? But . . . that's against the law, too!

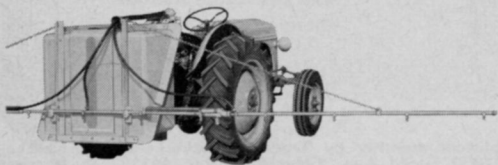
WEEDS TREES AND TURF is the national monthly magazine of urban/industrial vegetation maintenance, including turf management, weed and brush control, and tree care. Readers include "contract applicators," arborists, nurserymen, and supervisory personnel with highway departments, railways, utilities, golf courses, and similar areas where vegetation must be enhanced or controlled. While the editors welcome contributions by qualified freelance writers, unsolicited manuscripts, unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes, cannot be returned.

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