

# LANSING'S LABOR HOLIDAY

## The UAW Takes Action



As they voiced their grievances, Lansing union leaders also sought to demonstrate the respectability and discipline of their members. The American flags confirmed their loyalty to the United States. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

**They took it to the streets on June 7, 1937.**

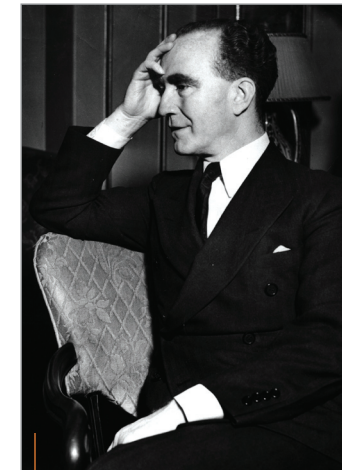
Following Flint's example, Lansing Amalgamated UAW Local 182 concluded a successful a sit-down strike at Reo in April 1937. A subsequent effort to organize Capital City Wrecking Company resulted in the firing of workers, picket lines and an injunction. When union president Lester Washburn ignored the injunction, Sheriff Allan MacDonald came to arrest him at 2:00 A.M. Washburn wasn't home, so the sheriff arrested his wife and took her to jail, leaving their three children with a neighbor girl. When morning came, 2,000-5,000 people took to the streets in support of the union.



Many shops, factories, theaters and businesses closed as the workers and their sympathizers blocked city streets. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Michigan.



The protesters took their case to the Capital, City Hall and police headquarters. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Michigan



Michigan Governor Frank Murphy called a meeting with union leaders and local authorities that resulted in Mrs. Washburn's release before the day was over. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Michigan.

**“So then we called the plant managers of all the plants and told ‘em ... what happened and told ‘em what we was gonna do about it.”**

**Lester Washburn, President  
Amalgamated Local 182**

**Remembering organizing the Labor Holiday**

### YOU AUTO KNOW

The Lansing Labor Holiday was one of the few general strikes in American history. In a general strike, the populace joins with strikers in closing businesses and stopping work.