



WHITE COLLAR

Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO and CLC

No. 355

JUNE, 1976



From the Desk of President Coughlin

Locals Are Urged to Revise Outdated Methods

If I had to choose a particular problem area at this time, I would select the lack of internal organization in our Local unions as the most important obstacle blocking their progress. We regularly read of the efficient political machine headed by Mayor Daley in Chicago. Whether or not we agree with Mayor Daley's politics is unimportant. It is important, however, to analyze why his machine is so successful. The success achieved in Chicago is due primarily to personal contact.

Some of our Local unions have tended to move away from personal contact and, instead, rely on letters, leaflets and telephone calls. This is a mistake. It is absolutely essential that our Local unions be restructured to insure closer personal contact with the membership. It is imperative, too, that our membership know its Local union leaders and be able to utilize channels of communication to them without undue delay or difficulty.

When we learn that members in certain bargaining units have initiated decertification petitions, and on their own have taken them to the National Labor Relations Board without the knowledge of their shop stewards and Local union leaders, we know immediately that communications have broken down between those units and the Local union. Sometimes Local union leaders were unaware that dissatisfaction existed in the units involved.

One reason for this has been the failure of the Local union leader regularly to visit companies under contract to that Local union, thus keeping the membership aware of the existence of the Local union and its leadership.

In too many instances, Local union leaders have a tendency to obtain only that information which is available from shop stewards who themselves may not be in close contact with the membership. It is im-

portant, therefore, that Local union leaderships make sure that shop stewards are elected or selected on the basis of their activities in behalf of the membership and their ready availability to it.

Old Procedures Outmoded

The International Union for several years has been advocating fewer membership meetings, particularly in urban areas, and has urged greater emphasis on more shop or unit meetings. Some union leaders may think that they are available to the entire membership when they are present at membership meetings. This may have been true years ago when these meetings were regularly attended by the bulk of the rank-and-file. That is no longer true.

Because of travel difficulties to union meetings, family obligations and fear of night travel in urban areas, members no longer attend such meetings in large numbers. Monthly meetings in those cases are outmoded. As indicated above, a lesser number of membership meetings should be replaced by a greater number of shop or unit meetings.

It may be necessary, too, to have Executive Boards of Locals expanded to provide for representation of all large groups; also to hold regular meetings of shop stewards so that shop problems can be regularly handled by union leaders. The National Labor Relations Board and the Courts nowadays are placing greater emphasis on the doctrine of fair representation. This subject was dealt with in great detail by General Counsel Joseph Finley at our recent meeting of full-time representatives in Chicago.

Follow-up of New Leads

Additional thought also should be given to our entire policy of following up new organizational leads. In numerous instances where organizational leads

come to a Local union office, the organizer or Business Representative tries to obtain all the information concerning the lead from the individual making the telephone contact. While much of this is necessary, it is never a good policy to answer all possible questions over the telephone.

This should be done at a personal meeting between the union representative and the individual interested in promoting union organization in his or her company.

The subject of unionism, collective bargaining, gains to be attained, National Labor Relations Board procedures and the possibility of unfair labor practices can never be discussed adequately in a telephone conversation. The Local union representative should, in person, take enough time to sell the values of the union and the need for organization to those interested in the subject of collective bargaining.

Leadership of our Local unions should take time out to discuss internal structures to insure better representation for their members and more efficient operation. There can be no substitute for personal contact. Local unions with good leadership and sound internal structures will never have to worry about raids on their collective bargaining units by other unions, or decertification petitions by dissatisfied members.

In this new era when members can file complaints with the National Labor Relations Board regarding fair representation, or when complaints on violations can be lodged with the Labor Department, or violations of Title VII can be sent to the EEOC, it is vital that our internal structure be revised, and channels of communication made available from the member, or prospective member, to the leadership of our Local unions.

4 Organizing Drives Add 200 More to OPEIU Rolls

In new organizing drives, more than 200 new members in four bargaining units were added to OPEIU ranks, according to latest reports from the field. The largest group was in Canada at a French-language newspaper. The other three in the U.S. comprised a printing firm, a school unit, and a credit union.

Canadian Director Romeo Corbeil reports that Montreal Local 57 had been certified by the Quebec Labour Relations Board as bargaining agent for a group of more than 100 sales personnel employed by the newspaper La Presse.

On the West Coast, Local 3 Business Representative Jerry McCool says that the San Francisco Local has been certified to represent 65 office employees at Vernon Graphics, Inc., in that city.

Local 95 Business Manager Larry Cross reports that 20 employees at the Mid-State Technical Institute, a statewide voca-

tional school with headquarters in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., had voted unanimously for OPEIU representation in a state-conducted election.

Vice President John B. Kinnick reports that Oakland Local 29 had won a two-to-one victory in a National Labor Relations Board election among 12 clericals at the Santa Cruz Teachers' Credit Union.

Union-Based Credit Unions Grew Rapidly Last Year

Membership in union-based credit unions in 1975 increased by more than 1.1 million, according to Credit Union National Association, Inc., in its 1976 Credit Union Yearbook.

Total assets of union-sponsored credit unions exceeded \$989 million at the end of calendar year 1975.

Overall membership increased to 31.9 million in 1975, an increase of 8% from 29.5

million in 1974. Millions of labor union members are also members of other credit unions serving employee groups or communities.

CUNA is the Madison-based headquarters of the national association for credit unions in the U.S. and has affiliates among 91% of the nation's credit unions.

CUNA's office staff are members of Madison's Local 39.

Congress Hears AFL-CIO Plea for NLRA Changes

The AFL-CIO and its affiliates urged Congress to strengthen the National Labor Relations Act, tighten its enforcement, and provide stiffer penalties for "hard core, anti-union employers" who now flout the law with impunity.

Summing up case histories cited by union witnesses before a House Labor subcommittee in two months of hearings, AFL-CIO Legislative Director Andrew J. Biemiller said these reflect "basic weaknesses in the law, not isolated exceptions."

He told the panel, headed by Rep. Frank Thompson, Jr., that the NLRA functions as it was intended where employers accept the right of workers to organize, however grudgingly.

But where voluntary compliance by employers is lacking, Biemiller said, the odds are heavily against workers who try to organize and negotiate a first contract in the face of an employer's determination to keep a union out.

As was the case before the original Wagner Act was passed 41 years ago, Biemiller noted, there are employers who fire workers who are active union supporters. Now, however, "a year, or two, or three, after the event and long after the orga-

nizing drive has been defeated, the discriminatee may receive back pay with interest and an order restoring him to his job," he said, adding:

"But an employer who has killed off a union organizing drive considers it a small price to pay."

Biemiller urged that Congress redress the pro-employer tilt of the Taft-Hartley Act by providing swifter remedies for employer unfair labor practices as it now does for union offenses such as secondary boycotts or picketline misconduct.

On the issue of dismissals of union supporters during organizing campaigns, Biemiller urged that the NLRB be obligated to seek court injunctions to restore a worker to his or her job immediately, and that the worker be authorized to bring a triple-damage suit against the employer.

To speed up NLRB proce-

(Continued on Page 4)

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Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC

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Restoring Personal Contacts

All officers of OPEIU Locals, Business Representatives and members should read and study President Coughlin's column in this month's issue. It calls for internal reorganization of Local union structures to meet a new era of changed conditions.

He notes a tendency of Local union leaders to lose close personal contact with their memberships, indicating that they're following outmoded methods and procedures that no longer suffice.

Monthly meetings, where members and leaders formerly became personally acquainted, are now poorly attended. Fear of crime in large urban centers, as well as traffic and family considerations, have for practical purposes made monthly meetings more or less obsolete. As a result, close personal contact which previously existed has dwindled.

Moreover, he emphasized that this has created a problem growing more urgent because of recent National Labor Relations Board rulings and court decisions. These now stress the doctrine of fair representation, thus placing more liability on Unions.

Consequently, he points out, more modern procedures and better methods must be devised to restore closer personal contact between Local union leaderships and their memberships.

He offers suggestions on how these changes can be implemented at Local levels, adding that the value of personal contact with prospective members also cannot be overlooked when new organizational leads are received.

Solving the problem involves both Local leadership and members. It calls for full and free discussion so that all can gain a clear understanding of the urgent need for action. Then new procedures can be implemented to reestablish viable two-way channels of communication for closer personal contact between leaderships and memberships.

Since the problem is urgent and common to all Locals, it should have top priority for early consideration so that each Local can devise suitable remedies to fit its own particular circumstances.

Bank Employees; Unionize!

Bank employees for generations have consoled themselves that although their pay is low compared with factory workers, their jobs are secure. They feel they can always count on regular weekly paychecks. (See story on this page.)

From time to time the OPEIU has warned them that those days are gone. With banks now automating it's only a question of time until bank jobs are as insecure as factory jobs. In other Free World Countries, bank employees unionized decades ago.

Like their counterparts in the U.S. and Canada they, too, wanted to be dignified, professional, and respected. They wanted to be promoted. But they knew they were being exploited so to gain their ends they unionized, bargained collectively, and achieved their aims.

But without a union, North American bank employees now realize they are tied to nonnegotiable salaries decreed unilaterally by management. They are the victims of every price rise with no cost-of-living clause to help them keep abreast of inflation. They lack any political or economic voice, so they are on "the short end."

Some continue to mortgage their weekly paychecks months in advance to meet installments on a home, a car, or a refrigerator. Meanwhile, bank profits have soared to historic highs but the employees haven't shared in this prosperity.

Unionized factory workers long ago accepted as a fact of life that they would face certain periods of unemployment through lay-offs or strikes. This didn't faze them. Today, they now surpass bank employees both in pay and fringe benefits simply because they unionized.

With growing automation, bank management eyes are greedily focused on the "bottom line." The road is clear for them to shut down unprofitable branches, dispense with excess personnel, and so increase profits. Many of them already are abolishing their pension plans, proving that the employees don't count—unless they unionize.

Automation now presents all bank employees with a serious challenge: To live in the past with hope growing dimmer, or unionizing for their own future security and self-protection, as well as that of their families.

Machines Oust Bank Tellers

4,000 Now in Use; Lower Costs Make Jobs Insecure

For years the OPEIU has been warning bank tellers that they should unionize because of the future threat of automation when mechanical tellers will replace them. This threat is growing more menacing week by week.

Although the first automatic teller was installed in 1969 at a Chemical Bank branch in New York City, the machines have been in general use only for about two years or so. But there are now about 4,000 in use in 700 institutions around the country, according to an industry source, with the heaviest concentrations in Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Portland, Ore., Seattle, and Columbus, Ohio.

The machines were originally intended as an adjunct to normal teller banking, with emphasis on 24-hour service. This is stressed by Atlanta First National's promotional song: "When you need checks cashed come and see me—on Christmas come by or on the Fourth of July."

But some customers seem to prefer the machines full time. First National has found that 52% of its customers use the machines during normal bank-

ing hours.

At Seattle's First National, which has 95 machines, an assistant vice president, said: "The idea initially was not to eliminate tellers, but basically to offer extended service after banking hours.

"But now we're finding that many people use them during banking hours. We found, too, that it's actually a few cents less expensive when a customer uses a machine than when he uses a teller."

A Seattle man, explaining why he used a machine when the teller windows were open, said: "There must be 50 people waiting for tellers. I hate to be herded into a line like cattle so I use the machine often."

A spokesman for Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, which has only five machines, three of them in Grand Central Terminal, has found that besides cash withdrawals, a major machine item is "small loans" of \$25 to \$50 from the BankAmericard.

"Apparently," he said, "people are loathe to use the tellers for these small advances; they don't want to look a teller in the eye and admit they must have

some cash to tide them over."

New York banks have been slow to automate "apparently because of some early bad experiences with some of the first machines," an executive said. But Citibank with eight machines, and Chemical with 31, in addition to Chase Manhattan, report highly successful results with their limited use.

"We believe over time it will expand," said a Citibank vice president. "The justification, the bottom line, is revenue related. We get more accounts, we get fee revenue, because we charge what a normal check costs."

Three of Citibank's machines are at sites where there is no other bank installations, and they are open during normal hours as a kind of minibranch.

As time goes on, installation of these machines will enable banks to dispense with unprofitable branches and, of course, personnel. A start is being already made in this direction and the pace can be expected to accelerate in the future.

Bank tellers in the U.S. total 250,000, eight of 10 being women. They comprise roughly one-fourth of all bank employment in the country.

Labor Union Influence Rated High in Poll Survey

Organized labor is a more influential institution than the House of Representatives, the Senate, or either major political party, in the view of 1,400 "key" Americans surveyed by a national news magazine.

Only the White House, the Supreme Court and television ranked higher, according to a survey conducted by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine.

AFL-CIO President George Meany ranked fourth in a list of the nation's 30 most influential individuals. President Ford, Secretary of State Kissinger and Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns were considered the top three most influential Americans.

A similar survey conducted last year by the magazine showed the U.S. Senate as the

fourth most influential institution, followed by organized labor. This time around, labor moved up one notch, trading places with the Senate.

The Bureaucracy was listed sixth this year, followed by Industry, the House of Representatives, newspapers, lobbies and pressure groups. The Democratic Party was ranked 17th and the Republican Party 22nd.

Don't Forget!
Please give \$2 to your Local's VOTE Fund-Raising Drive.

OPEIU Booth Beckons Unorganized



An educational booth, sponsored by Local 129 at the Union Industries Show in Houston, Tex., proved to be a tremendous success in making new contacts with unorganized office employees in that city. Another booth was sponsored by American Income Life, whose employees are all OPEIU members. Shown at OPEIU booth from left are: Local 129 President Lorene Scarsellato; Sgt.-at-Arms Maxie Ziesemer; Sec.-Treas. Joyce Bokemeyer; OPEIU Vice President Frank Morton; AFL-CIO Union Label Department President Joseph D. Keenan and Sec.-Treas. Earl D. McDavid; OPEIU Sec.-Treas. William A. Lowe; AFL-CIO Sec.-Treas. Lane Kirkland, and Mrs. Margaret Lowe, wife of Bill Lowe.

N.Y. VOTE Drive in High Gear

Retirees Donating More Than \$3 Per Capita

Ed Edom, president of the New York Retirees Assn., and co-Chairperson of Local 153's VOTE Committee, reveals that this year's Bicentennial Drive is off to a flying start.

He disclosed that in the first week, his VOTE appeal letter to Local 153 retirees resulted in contributions of \$506 from 169 members, an average of better than \$3. He received some \$10 contributions, several sending in \$5 each.

"Over 90 percent of the contributors, most making do on fixed incomes, gave \$2 or more," he said, predicting that "just about all the retirees will be heard from before the campaign is over." The retirees now number almost 500.

Edom expressed delight but not surprise at the response. He said retirees remember the 1930s. Then there were no jobless benefits; no social security

or pension plans. He said retirees recall gratefully that organized labor, through its political action program in the past four decades, had brought about these social advances.

"Younger people now take these for granted," he pointed out. "They know nothing about what things were like in the 1930's, or the long hard fight by organized labor to bring about the conditions they now enjoy," adding:

"If union leaders and members become apathetic, all these gains can also be lost overnight. Young or old, all of us must pull our full weight because Big Business this year will pour huge sums into this election to put reactionaries in Congress. Right now we need a National Health bill passed, among other laws beneficial to organized labor."

As Local 153's VOTE co-

Chairperson, Edom explained that shop stewards are circularized in all bargaining units. They post campaign notices on bulletin boards. "We make them responsible to contact each union member in their offices and personally solicit contributions to VOTE. We follow up this with phone calls to stewards to keep them on the ball."

"That's our only secret," he said. "People won't give unless asked personally by someone who can explain things to them. Actually, by giving \$2 to VOTE every OPEIU member is investing wisely in his own future. It's that simple."

With other volunteer retirees who help in the annual VOTE drive, Edom works hard. But he smiles happily that their dedicated efforts are "a labor of love for the OPEIU which has done so much for us over the years."

Food Firm Yields Tasty Packet

2 Year Pact at White Rose Wins \$3,500 Per Member

A package of wage gains and fringe benefits, estimated at approximately \$3,500 per unit member, was gained by New York Local 153 in a renegotiated two-year contract for its office unit at White Rose Corp., a division of DiGiorgio Corp.

Business Representative Gerry Fromm, who led the negotiations, says it calls for an across-the-board wage boost of \$18 per week (or 11%, whichever is greater) in the first year, and \$20 (or 10%, whichever is greater) in the second. It also contains a COLA clause pro-

viding 1¢ an hour for each additional point increase after the CPI has a 5 point rise.

In the second year, it sets a minimum starting weekly rate of \$124.25 in the lowest grade, rising to a \$149.25 maximum, and in the top classification a minimum rate of \$199.25 rising to a \$276.25 maximum. Step increases from minimum to maximum were raised to \$3, and promotional increases to \$10 from the previous \$7.50.

Other gains are two additional holidays, bringing the annual total to 17, and an improved

vacation schedule providing three weeks after four years; four after 12, and five after fifteen years.

Dental and optical family coverage were added to the health-welfare plan, the employer also agreeing to pay up to \$3 additional per week for any increased costs in the plan during the life of the agreement. Effective May 5, 1977, the employer will increase contributions to the pension plan by \$3 per week for each individual.

One additional day was won for sick leave, eligibility for leaves of absence was reduced to one year (was three); maternity leave was increased to one year from six months, and union leave of absence increased to six months from one week.

The new agreement runs to May, 1978.

Texas Unit Scores Big in New Glass Firm Pact

Substantial wage gains, ranging from 16% added to the minimum of the labor grade structure to 10% in the maximum and an automatic progression of \$25 per month each six months, with greatly improved fringe benefits were gained in a one-year contract renegotiated by Fort Worth Local 277 for its 50-member office unit at Owens-Illinois Glass Company in Waco, Texas.

Local 277 Business Manager J. B. Moss reports that other wage gains include an improved method of computing overtime, increases granted to some employees to correct inequities, in addition to promotional increases of \$35 per month.

A new clause was negotiated guaranteeing salary payment for any employee who attends National Guard or military reserve training.

Other gains are an additional paid holiday, bringing the annual total to 10; and more liberal vacations providing three

weeks after eight years; 3½ weeks after 15 years; four weeks after 20, and five weeks after 25.

Additional improvements were made in dental insurance, long-term disability insurance, hospital-surgical and pension plans. The new agreement runs to April 30, 1977.

Union Protests Kill Right-to-Work Bill

A so-called right-to-work bill was killed in the Vermont state legislature, thanks to the combined lobbying efforts of the labor movement. The opposition was organized by the Vermont Labor Forum and helped to mobilize 400 trade unionists to attend a hearing on the bill.

Give to VOTE!

Your \$2 contribution to VOTE will help elect our friends to public office.

Plan Computer System to Match Jobs to Jobless

A five-year program to develop and install a nationwide automated employment security system to better serve employers and job seekers through computerized job matching and unemployment insurance services has been announced by Labor Secretary W. J. Usery, Jr.

Described as the Employment Security Automation Plan (ESAP), it involves the U.S. Employment Service, the Unemployment Insurance Service, and affiliated state agencies

which operate job service and unemployment insurance offices.

The automated system will use a computerized data communication system to screen job applicants against employer orders on an area basis, and process unemployment insurance claims more rapidly on a state-wide basis.

The unemployment insurance benefit system will be completed nationwide in three years.

Minnesota School Unit Gains 20.32% in New Pact

A package of wage gains and fringe benefits totaling 20.32% over two years was won by Twin Cities Local 12 in a renegotiated contract for its 100-member bargaining unit of office employees and secretaries in South Washington County Schools District 833 in Cottage Grove, Minn., Business Manager H.R. Markusen reports.

The new agreement is retroactive to July 1, 1975, and calls for an across-the-board wage boost of 9.66% in the first year. On the same 1976 date, another 8.60% wage increase will be tacked on.

Effective September 1, 1975, the School Board agreed to pay \$17.98 per month per full-time individual for health and hospitalization insurance and \$20.41 for dependent coverage. The board also agreed to pay premiums for \$15,000 per individual for term life insurance, and \$5.50 per month toward the dental plan. The new agreement runs to June 30, 1977.

The OPEIU negotiating team assisting Markusen included Stewards Maurcen Barnett, Helen Fiebing, Catherine Lindberg, Loyola Shappel and Kathleen Mattson.

\$4,500 Per Member Won for GTE Electric Unit

Wage gains totaling almost \$4,500 per individual, with other fringe benefit improvements, were won by Local 28 in a new three-year agreement renegotiated for its 900 office employee unit at GTE Automatic Electric, Inc., in Chicago, Ill., Business Representative Bill Cox reports.

The new agreement provides across-the-board salary boosts of \$62.32 per month in the first year, with increases of \$52 per month in each of the two succeeding years.

A new holiday, the employee's birthday, raises the total of paid holidays to 11. A floating holiday was added in the previous agreement.

Pension benefits were increased by \$1 to \$7 per month for each year of service, with additional increases of 50¢ per month to be provided in the second and third years.

PRMMI Contract Signed in San Juan



Local 402 leaders celebrate occasion at ceremony marking new agreement negotiated with Puerto Rico Marine Management, Inc., a government-owned company which took over Sea Land, Inc., operations on the island. From left are PRMMI Personnel Director Neil Hamilton, Vice President of Industrial Relations Sergio Casaine, OPEIU Vice President John Kelly, OPEIU International Representative Jimmy Diaz, former Local 402 President Gilberto Cruz, and incumbent President Alfredo Aponte.

OPEIU Wins Case for Typist Fired in Work Dispute, Arbiter Upholds Union

A clerk-typist, discharged by the Olin Company for alleged insubordination toward her supervisor, was reinstated in her job without loss of pay, seniority or benefits when Lake Charles, La., Local 87 filed a grievance in her behalf and brought the case to Arbiter George W. Cowart, who upheld the Union.

The grievant, Jacquelin A. Thurston, was employed by the company since July, 1973, first in the purchasing department, later in the traffic and accounting departments, and finally in the traffic department to which she returned on October 1, 1975.

Two other typists working with her were assigned to a training job that morning. When they returned to their desks they found a large amount of billing work had just come in so one of the typists divided the work into three parts, giving one-third to each.

Ms. Thurston returned the work to the basket, and continued working on the bills already on her desk. The other typist complained to the supervisor who immediately called the grievant to his office where a heated discussion apparently took place. The supervisor then ordered grievant to go with him to the Personnel office. She refused and went back to her desk.

The supervisor later called personnel and they advised him to suspend her indefinitely, which he did. Subsequently, she was discharged on October 3, 1975 for insubordination.

The company maintained that the grievant committed "rank and gross insubordination" when she stated that it was "senseless" to talk to her supervisor, that her work record was minimally marginal, that she was a disturbing influence in her department and, therefore, that her suspension and discharge was "for just cause."

The Union argued that grievant was unjustly discharged, and should be reinstated without loss of pay, seniority or other benefits.

After hearing testimony from both sides, Arbiter Cowart ruled that her supervisor had the responsibility to check the work on grievant's desk at the time, that the other typist assumed authority she didn't have, and that the supervisor accepted her word about the problem, placing the grievant in a defensive position.

He said that the evidence presented by the company was insufficient to sustain the discharge of grievant for insubordination, and that such discharge was "not for just cause."



Back pay totaling \$5,808.24 was won by Lake Charles, La., Local 87, for member Jacquelin Thurston who was fired by Olin Corp. for "insubordination" as International Representative Jack Langford reads arbiter's award. Standing behind them (from left) are Local 87 President Howard Black, Business Manager Jim Compton, and Sec.-Treas. Leo Bourgeois. Local 87 brought the typist's case to arbitration.

Baton Rouge, La., Unit Scores at Waterworks

Wage boosts totaling some \$120 a month, or almost \$2,400 per individual in the first two years, with a wage reopener in the third year plus more liberal vacations, were gained by Local 428 in a new three-year contract renegotiated for its 125-member unit of office and clerical employees at Baton Rouge Waterworks, Baton Rouge, La.

OPEIU Vice President Frank E. Morton reports that the new pact provides a 40¢ an hour across-the-board increase effective

last April 11, with another 35¢ an hour boost effective next April 11. These raises will boost the average monthly salary to roughly \$788, from the previous \$667 figure, in the two years.

The vacation schedule was liberalized to provide four weeks after 15 years (was 16). Both parties agreed to continue unchanged all other terms of the previous contract which was negotiated in 1975. The new agreement runs to April 10, 1979.



NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE: Shown signing contract (clockwise) are Company Vice President & Sec.-Treas. Ed D. Roberts, Senior Vice President D. J. Suarez, Jr.; OPEIU Vice President Frank E. Morton, members Ed Harris, Clarence Jackson, Local 428 Sec.-Treas. George Vanner, Nelson Smith, and Local 428 President Lionel Lee.

U.S. Ups Poverty Level

Keeping a family of four above the poverty level will take almost \$500 more in income this year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The department has set \$5,500 as the annual income level below which an urban family of four is considered poor. In 1975, the level was \$5,050.

A single person is considered poor if income falls below \$2,800 a year, up from \$2,590 last year.

Poverty level guidelines as used by federal and state officials to determine eligibility for various job-training and assistance programs. The increase reflects living costs during the past year, the department said.

Hotel Auditor Learns Value of a Union Card

Robert Sullivan, a night auditor at the Hotel Martinique in New York, is happier and richer by \$1,171 because he held an OPEIU card in Local 153.

Employed by the hotel on the midnight shift for eight years, Sullivan was laid off without severance pay when management decided that its changed clientele and operation made the midnight shift unnecessary. He brought the matter to the attention of Michael Ponti, Business Representative of Local 153's Hotel Division.

Although the union's contractual provision applies only to house or departmental closings, Ponti argued that Sullivan was entitled to four days' pay for each year of service because he was as completely unemployed as if there had been a closing. His argument prevailed.

As Ponti presented a severance check to the auditor, Sullivan gratefully shook his hand and said: "I don't know how you did it, but it is terrific and I'll tell the world that you, and the Union, are great."

Mail Order Concern Yields 17½% Pay Hike

Pay increases of 17½% across-the-board, an additional paid holiday and improved health-welfare and pension plans were gained by Cincinnati Local 388 in a new three-year agreement renegotiated for its 310-member unit of office clerical employees at R. L. Polk and Company, mail order concern.

Local President Daisy Penrod says the pact provides for a general increase of 6½% retroactive to April 5 in the first year, and 5½% boosts in April 1977 and April 1978. The agreement contains a cost-of-living clause which has adjustments in April 1977 and April 1978 of one cent an hour for each 0.5 percent rise in the Consumer Price Index when the CPI rises more than 5½% over a February-to-February period.

The new agreement includes a tenth paid holiday, the day after Thanksgiving, and increases the shift differential to 12 cents an hour from the previous 10 cents.

A new disability clause, effective on January 1, 1977, will provide full pension benefits for disabled employees who are at least 40 years of age with 15 years of service. Also, on that date current pension benefits of \$75 a month will rise to \$82.50, and to \$100 in April, 1978.

The company also agreed to

increase its contribution toward the cost of premiums for Blue Cross-Blue Shield coverage.

The new agreement runs to April 5, 1979.

If you move, send your old and new address, including zip code and social security or social insurance number to:

William A. Lowe, Sec.-Treas.
815 16th Street, N.W., Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20006

U.S. Price Index

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
New Base 1967=100

1976	
April	168.6
May	169.3
June	169.6
July	169.3
August	168.8
September	168.6
October	164.6
November	165.6
December	166.3

1976	
January	166.7
February	167.1
March	167.5
April	168.2

Canadian Price Index

Statistics Canada
Base 1961=100

1976	
April	179.6
May	181.3
June	184.0
July	186.6
August	186.4

* New Base 1971 = 100

August	141.2
September	141.5
October	142.8
November	144.1
December	144.3

1976	
January	145.1
February	145.6
March	146.2
April	146.6

Give to VOTE!

Your \$2 contribution now will help elect our friends to Congress.