Big Brown & Sharpe Election Is Won By Great Majority

Providence, R. I.—A smashing victory was won by the Office Employees International Union in the election conducted on June 20 by the National Labor Relations Board among the office and clerical workers of the Brown & Sharpe Co., one of the world’s largest and oldest manufacturers of machine tools.

The workers voted by better than a two to one majority for the union as their collective bargaining agent, the exact tally being 717 to 329.

It was one of the biggest elections in which the OEIU has participated to date and demonstrates conclusively the great desire of the Brown & Sharpe office workers for improvements which can be attained only through organized effort.

The voting was conducted as the June issue of The Office Worker went to press and followed by only a few days the NLRB election triumphs at Remington Rand, Inc., in Elmira, N. Y., and at George A. Fuller Co., and Merritt, Chapman Scott Corp., contracting firms’ offices at Quonset Point, R. I.

Negotiations

President Ray Jamieson of the local announced that a contract committee has been selected by the membership to work with the officers of the local in preparing proposals. The committee embraces office and clerical workers from various departments and classifications in the century-old establishment.

Negotiations on the proposed working agreement have gotten under way. Conferences with company representatives commenced on July 9. The committee is being assisted at the local by President Paul R. Hutchings, secretary-treasurer, announced the appointment of three full-time organizers—George F. Firth, C. A. Stafford and Frank F. Randall, all vice presidents of the International Union.

Randall is a member of Local 12 at Pittsburgh and has been serving as an AFL organizer for the last year, working exclusively on OEIU matters. He has long experience in the organization of office and clerical workers, having formed the Tacoma, Wash., local 9 years ago and served in various capacities, including executive secretary, until, at the request of our organization, he accepted the AFL appointment to work on matters of our trade out of Pittsburgh. He was a vice president of the International Council for the entire period of its existence.

Stafford was active in the formation of the Port Arthur, Texas local and served as one of its officers. He has been conducting organizing campaigns at Gulf Oil and in the shipyards at Orange. He has been employed in the office of the Texas Company for many years and is well acquainted with the problems of office workers in the area and particularly in the refining industry.

Randall has served as president and business representative of Oakland, Calif., Local 29 and also served as a vice president of the International Council. He has also served as a special organizer for office and clerical workers in the shipbuilding and repair industry of the San Francisco Bay area on a full time basis under the program sponsored by the AFL, the state federation, San Francisco Central Labor Council, Bay Cities Metal Trades and the San Francisco Building Trades.

American Ice Co. Pact is Approved

Washington, D. C.—Wage adjustments included in the new contract negotiated by Local 2 with the American Ice Co., here have been approved by the War Labor Board, retroactive to March 15.

The minimum is raised $5 a week for junior clerks, stenographers and telephone operators, $8 a week for bookkeepers, $10 a week for senior clerks and bookkeepers. Increases in the maximum wages are $2.50 a week for junior clerks, $5 a week for senior clerks and bookkeepers. Increases in the maximum wages are $2.50 a week for senior clerks, $5 a week for bookkeepers, $10 a week for stenographers and $15 a week for telephone operators.

The board also approved automatic 6-month increase provisions which assure all workers a raise of $1 per week each six months until they reach the maximum of their classification.

The contract was negotiated by W. R. Proboy, president and business representative of Local 2, and Ernest H. Hinkins, vice president of the local and shop steward of the office. President Paul R. Hutchings of the International Union assisted them.

More Organizers At Work for OEIU

Georges P. Firth C. A. Stafford
Washington, D. C.—President Paul R. Hutchings and J. Howard Hicks, secretary-treasurer, announced the appointment of three full-time organizers—George F. Firth, C. A. Stafford and Frank F. Randall, all vice presidents of the International Union.

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Gulf Refinery

Port Arthur, Texas.—The Office Employees International Union has been certified by the National Labor Relations Board as the exclusive bargaining agent for the office and clerical workers at the Gulf Oil Co. refinery. The union was chosen by a substantial majority in the recent NLRB election.

CONTRACT SIGNED WITH POWER FIRM

Meridian, Miss.—A new agreement with the Mississippi Power Co. has been negotiated and signed by Local 94 for the office and clerical staff of the Meridian division.

A. R. Carson, vice president of the International Union, worked with officers of the local on the negotiations, which resulted in wage adjustments, subject to approval of the War Labor Board and retroactive to May 16, and other improvements.

The new wage schedules increase minimum rates of various classifications from $1 to $5 a month and the increases in maxima range up to $11 per month. Also provided are step increases of $1 a month each six months until the maximum of the classification is obtained.

Some of the other highlights of the new pact are two-week vacation periods, pay while on jury duty, and the requirement that employees called on to perform work of a higher classification shall receive the higher rate and shall receive their regular rate if required to perform work of a lower classification.

Provision is made for opening the wage schedule on 30-day notice if any change is made in the present wage stabilization regulations.

Assisting in the negotiations were R. K. Simmons, president of Local 94, Mae Carol Eastwood, assistant secretary-treasurer, AFL Organizer Lewis G. Hines and U. S. Con- cillator W. G. Byars.

Wage Boost

Portland, Ore.—Local 11 has obtained WLB approval of an increase in wages for its members employed in the retail grocery industry. The improvements include a 5-cent increase in the maximum rates, retroactive to October 15, 1944, and two-week vacations with pay after 5 years of service. Irving Enns, secretary-treasurer of the local, also announced approval of wage adjustments for the members of the local employed at Roberts Brothers Department Store.

2 Locals Join In Campaign

New Haven, Conn.—An intensive joint organizing campaign of New Haven Local 123 and Stamford Local 10 is getting under way.

The two locals have designated John H. Rice to serve as organizer and business representative in the campaign, in which the International Union is cooperating, which will continue for three months.

A joint committee has been established to direct the activities, which it is anticipated will bring the benefits of organization to many office and clerical workers in Connecticut.

Recently the state adopted a "baby" Wagner act which assures protection for the rights of workers in intrastate establishments.
What Is a Minimum Adequate Budget?

Office workers who want an answer to this question may find it in the quarterly budget studies of the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics. The work of this committee has won national recognition; its studies are considered authoritative and are widely used to represent minimum adequate living standards.

The Committee's answer to our question is: In round numbers, $67.50 a week or $5,510 a year, is the minimum "these data indicate" budget for a white collar worker's family of four—in war time. (Note that the Committee's figure is for San Francisco; the figure here quoted is adjusted for U. S. average prices as of May 1945.)

This budget provides for adequate nutrition as determined by experts and for the standard of clothing, housing and other items necessary for the family and its salary-earner. "To maintain a place in the social life of the community or even a job". The Committee confers with mothers of white-collar families every year to make sure the items included in the budget actually represent what they buy and show changes in customs. But it is a minimum budget.

Also, it is a wartime budget. About $1,000 worth of normal personal and family time expenses have been cut from the budget because (a) goods are off the market or rationed—foods, automobiles, gasoline, etc., (b) the family is expected voluntarily to reduce its living to bare essentials in wartime. These voluntary cuts include: No guests entertained at home; no laundry sent out; telephone calls, advertisements, magazines cut by half; vacations reduced to one week; no servant girl to help in the cleaning. And the Committee warns that the budget, with these cuts, "under no circumstances is to be interpreted as a possible or desirable standard of living."

How much of the $500 of purchases thus cut from the budget is replaced by war bond purchases? (10 per cent of income) and taxes, which together add up to $50 and are included in the $3,615 yearly total or $67.50 a week. So the amount of a peace-time budget would be close to this figure, or you would spend more than their $500 for instead of taxes and bonds.

What Does This Budget Give Your Family?

Because the Heller Committee is recognized as an authoritative body, it is important to know what they consider a minimum adequate living for a white collar worker's family. Certainly it is minimum—"for a family who would have no help, but his hat, raincoat and jacket must last two years" (price from $3.65 to $5.10). His shoes may be repaired six times yearly at $2.65 each.

His sister, 5 years old, may have three cotton dresses ($2.50) and one new blouse ($1.44) each year, but her hat ($1.65), coat ($14.10), raincoat ($2.25), sweater ($3.65) and wool skirt ($5.75) last each two years. She may have two party dresses ($3.75) in three years. Her shoes may be repaired 4 times a year at $1.25 each.

Other items: These include operating an automobile on an A ration card, costing not over $63.25 per year for operating costs and repairs plus $24 for insurance. Medical care also is included at $179 per year for all care for the entire family. This provides for care through a general practitioner and the Committee states clearly that if no such plan is available, minimum cost would be $250 a year. No allowance is made for prenatal care, tuberculosis or care of any condition which began before the group practice contract was signed. This is minimum care. For amusements, the family may set aside $2 a month! They may have one week's vacation if it does not cost them more than $29! For life insurance $17.95.

This description touches the high spots of the Heller Budget for white collar workers.

Space does not allow more detail, but this will show that the budget is by no means extravagant.
Pay Boost for U. S. Workers

Washington, D. C.—By affixing his signature to the Jackson-Downewy bill, President Truman made substantial pay increases immediately available to more than a million classified federal employees.

The act provides an average 15.9 per cent increase in basic pay and gives government workers, many of whom are AFL union members, time and a half for overtime instead of the time and a twelfth which they formerly received.

Wage boosts are staggered in accordance with the following formula: 20 per cent on the first $1,200 of salary, 10 per cent additional on everything between $1,200 and $4,600, and 5 per cent on that part of salary above $4,600.

Time and a half for overtime is paid beyond 40 hours to employees whose salaries are under $2,980. The amount and rate of overtime will be lower for employees in the higher brackets.

The law also provides a 10 per cent differential for work between the New Year's Day and 6 a.m., except where a higher rate already has been established.

Holiday pay at time and a half is authorized by the new law for employees who are ordered to work on any holiday that is declared as a non-work day by the President.

In addition, the act reduces the waiting period between the wage increases and directs that salaries must be paid every other week, instead of twice a month.

In a memorandum to the Civil Service Commission, the President said the administrative workweek of federal employees should be 40 hours to be worked in five 8-hour days.

"Wherever possible," he wrote the commission, "the practice should be followed of scheduling the first 40 hours on Monday through Friday with any overtime hours to be scheduled on Saturday."

This definitely means that Saturday will be the overtime day for the vast majority of federal workers.

Canadian Workers Continue Trend

St. Catharines, Ont.—The successful launching of a campaign directed toward the unionization of office workers employed in local pulp and paper mills has been announced by AFL Organizer Russell Harvey, who is spearheading the drive in this city. It is anticipated that organization of this group will advance rapidly and that applications for a local union charter will be made in the near future.

Organizer Harvey is receiving wholehearted support from members and local unions of the National Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Workers and it is anticipated that further rapid strides will be made toward complete unionization of all office workers in this industry in eastern Canada.

Summer Holidays

Washington, D. C.—The War Labor Board announced on June 21 that employers may grant office and clerical workers a 3-day or 5-day week during the period from June 1 to September 15 without any reductions in their earnings from the $6 or $8 day week which had been in effect.

No approval of the War Labor Board or its regional boards is required in connection with the granting of such weekly summer holidays.

UNION CERTIFIED FOR FERRY LINE

Seattle, Wash.—Office Employees International Union has been certified as the exclusive bargaining agent for office and clerical employees of the Puget Sound Navigation Co. at offices in the Canadian National dock building and the Colman dock terminal.

The workers voted for representation by the union in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board, according to Mrs. Mildred Erickson, business representative of Seattle Local 8, and a vice president of the International Union.

UNION CERTIFIED AT WATCH CONCERN

Ludington, Mich.—Local 113 has been certified as collective bargaining agent for the office and clerical employees of the Star Watch Co., which is now engaged in the manufacture of precision instruments for the Navy. An overwhelm-
NEW SHIPBUILDING AGREEMENT SOUGHT

Washington, D. C.—Preliminary steps directed toward the inclusion of the International Union in a new Pacific Coast master shipbuilding and ship repair agreement are being taken by local unions in the area having members employed in these industries. An informal meeting at Portland, Ore., was attended by International Union Vice Presidents Mildred Erickson, Seattle, and C. C. Newell, Vancouver, Atty., William W. Atterbury, secretary-treasurer, Local 23, Tacoma, and Irving Enna, secretary-treasurer, Local 11, Portland.

The meeting was devoted to a discussion of the possible steps to be pursued in achieving the desired result with the decision that the International Union and other local unions on the West Coast asked Congress in the program would participate fully in the future moves on the matter.

Relaxation of Wage Controls In Vinson Plan

Washington, D. C.—Announcing that wage controls will be relaxed to make up for loss of wartime pay advantages, War Mobilization Director Ralph T. Twitchell said the voluntary wage control plans calling for positive government action to prevent depression from coming to us as the guest of postwar prosperity.

High wages, lower taxes, unemployment compensation and public works form the backbone of the program in which Mr. Vinson outlined a hearty plan for government rather than a policy of doing nothing as necessary to assure smooth national transition to a peacetime life. Mr. Vinson, making public his quarterly report to Congress as the President, stated “we must be prepared to make some upward adjustments to compensate for severe declines in take-home pay.” He explained in a news conference, 12 per cent increases in wage rates above Little Steel formula limits.

Boost Minimum

Making clear the official government position on substantial pay increases, the new Congress has increased the minimum pay to raise the statutory minimum wage from 40 cents to “at least 50 cents an hour, with provision for further permissible increase to a higher level by the industry committees” provided for in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

NEW NLRB HEAD

Washington, D. C.—An era of decreasing labor representation controveversy was foreseen as the result of the appointment by President Truman of Paul M. Herzog to be chairman of the National Labor Relations Board. Mr. Herzog succeeds H. A. Millis, who resigned. While he has served with the U.S. WLB Studies Postwar Wage Plans; May Modify Formula

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The National War Labor Board now has under consideration a new national wage policy designed to meet reconversion and postwar emergencies.

Four types of action are being weighed by the board. There are: 1—Legislation by Congress to raise the statutory minimum wage from 40 cents an hour to 50 or 65 cents. This would simplify the NLWB’s efforts to raise substantial standard pay rates. 2—Development of a new formula to supplement the Little Steel formula to grant wage increases to workers whose straight time average hourly earnings may fall as a result of reconversion developments. Many wartime types of inverted wage increases designed to retain manpower and increase production are expected to fall by the wayside during reconversion with a consequent loss in “take home” earnings. Many workers stand to be downgraded to lower-paying jobs. Millions will lose overtime pay. An industry-by-industry approach may be used.

3—Revision of the so-called wage bracket system to take account of industry wage factors. The bracket system imposes area-wide ceilings on most wages, banning increases above the minimum bracket of “sound and tested going rates” in each community. With reconversion and postwar areas, the board plans to permit some adjustment in wages in accordance with industry-wide factors.

4—Development of a plan to strip away unnecessary controls. General regulations of the board may be changed to grant employers greater flexibility in making industry wage adjustments, looking toward eventual removal of all controls on wage adjustments which do not involve compensating price increases. Here, the main consideration is not to get ahead of the manpower situation and permitemployers to bid up the labor market while manpower remains scarce.

Board consideration of these four phases of wage policy is expected to take several weeks. Conclusions to be transmitted to Economic Stabilization, Director William Davis for study preliminary to submission to the White House. Some of the changes under consideration would be made by mere administrative action. Others would require changes in outstanding executive orders, while the attack on substantial wage increases would require legislation.

Organized labor’s demand that 48 hours’ pay be provided for 40 hours work after hours are reduced will be debated by the board.

Navy for the past two years, Mr. Herzog formerly was a member of the New York State Labor Relations Board.

MACHINERY GROUP SHOWS INTEREST

Dannerville, N. Y.—Interest in unionization has been evidenced by office and clerical workers employed in the machinery manufacturing plant of the Post-Wheeler Corp. in this city, according to J. Howard Hicks, secretary-treasurer of the International Union, who represents the company with representatives of the group.

Tentative plans for the launching of an aggressive organizing campaign by the union have been drawn and it is hoped that circumstances will permit these plans to be crystallized into action in the near future. Lodge No. 1665 of the International Association of Machinists represents the production workers of the company and officers of this union have pledged their support to the undertaking.

Broader Program For Yountsters Is Urged By Perkins

WASHINGTON, D. C.—A comprehensive plan for immediate expansion of health, welfare, education, and other protective services of child life and children was presented to President Truman by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins before she left office the first of this month. Incidentally, all walks of life paid tribute to her at a banquet on the eve of her departure from the cabinet office.

The proposals represent the result of a year’s intensive study of the National Children in Wartime. Members of this commission include authorities in the professional fields concerned with child health, welfare, and education, leaders of the national organizations which work directly with and for children, and representatives of government and labor.

“Our greatest chance for a lasting peace lies not with us but with our children,” Secretary Perkins said. “If they are to have a fair chance to mold that peace into a thing enriching and rewarding every one of our boys and girls must be helped, through their families and through public services, to face that future with confidence.”

Practical Solution

“That help must come in very practical form—adequate medical care and health services; family insurance against loss of income from unemployment, disability, old age, and death; and the widest kind of educational opportunities.

“We cannot and must not let another generation of youngsters grow to adulthood and find again that four out of every 10 of our men have physical and mental handicaps, as Selective Service found among the men drafted for service in this war.”

ELECTION ORDERED

Santa Rita, N. M.—Local 62 has obtained sufficient representation among the workers of the Santa Rita Store Company, which is owned by Kennecott Copper Corporation, to make the Santa Rita branch of the National Labor Relations Board. That agency has ordered an election to determine whether the majority of the employees desire to be represented by the union.