ORGANIZE WORKERS OF TOBACCO FIRMS

Durham, N. C.—Office and clerical employees of Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company and the American Tobacco Company, organizing under the banner of the OEU, have already signed applications for the Regional War Labor Board. A substantial number of the more than 200 employees have already signed applications and it is anticipated that bargaining rights will shortly be established.

Active support and cooperation is being received from A. E. Brown, AFL organizer, and also from the Tobacco Workers International Union.

WLB Orders Union Security Clause

Tampa, Fla.—Security for office and clerical workers in Tampa Electric Company was won by Local 46 in a unanimous decision of the Regional War Labor Board.

The issue went to the board, by agreement of the union and the company, after management rejected the maintenance of membership clause in the contract proposed by the union. There was no dispute on other provisions of the contract, which was reported in a previous issue of The Office Worker.

Renew Contract

For Union Staff

Kansas City, Mo.—Local 4 reports the renewal of a working agreement between office and clerical workers employed in the headquarters of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Ir on Ship Builders and Helpers of America. A blanket increase of 20 cents an hour was agreed to in a mutual effort to offset the decrease in take-home pay resulting from the return to the normal work week.

Gas Co. Force Is Organizing

Lincoln, Ill.—The first organization of office and clerical workers in this city is now going on, with a substantial majority of the office employees at the Lincoln Gas Company signed up with the OEU in a campaign conducted by Sarah Konan, business representative of Chicago Local 28, AFL Organizer Wadsworth and the officers of the Central Labor Union. A local union charter has been granted to this group.

On Brown & Sharpe Picket Line

International President Paul R. Hutchings (at left) is shown with Walter Sanford, secretary-treasurer of Local 78; Ray Jamieson, president of the local, and Walter D. Parenteau, a shop steward, in one of the picket lines at Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Company, Providence, R. I.

Brown & Sharpe Employees Standing Firm In Strike

Providence, R. I.—Office and clerical workers of Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Company are holding firm in their strike for an equitable adjustment of wages.

The company, one of the world's largest builders of machine and hand tools, had been completely tied up for over a month when the union advised the company and the union submit the dispute to the board.

The union advised the board of its willingness to accept the proposal as a method of terminating the strike.

The Regional Board, composed of labor, industry and public representatives, made the proposal after hearing the union's position, presented by International President Hutchings, and the company's position.

When notified of the company's decision, Hutchings issued a statement in which he declared: "The company's position reflects a 'devil may-care' attitude completely disregarding all but its own stubborn self-interest. Management makes it quite clear that it intends to try and 'break us on the wheel' and force us to submit to its medieval standards. This we shall not do."

"Our members, the clerical forces of this plant, yes and the plant workers, too, as well as the people of Providence, all well know the basic principle involved in this controversy. With equity and justice as our watchwords we will carry on and cannot fail."

ELECTION VICTORY

AT U. S. GAUGE CO.

Seliersville, Pa.—The office and engineering employees of the U. S. Gauge Co. voted November 16 in favor of the Office Employees International Union and the International Federation of Engineers and Architects, and thus established the first bargaining agency in the railroad tool manufacturing industry.

Workers of this company began last May when AFL Organizer Howard Klein of Allentown, Pa. found that the employees were desirous of being represented by unions. The work was carried on by OEU Vice President Firth, who also represented the Engineers in the local.

Committees are preparing for negotiations which are expected to begin soon.

Blue Cross Pact

In Negotiation

Denver, Colo.—A proposed contract has been prepared by Local 5 and negotiations are under way this month with the Blue Cross Hospital Service.

Vice President Frank F. Randall of the OEU is assisting the local, which was chosen by the Blue Cross office workers as their collective bargaining agent in an NLRB election October 12.

Active in the organization drive were Joyce Eager, secretary-treasurer of the Local; Eileen Major, vice-president; Wesley Johnson, Colorado State Federation of Labor organizer, and Rudy Cooh, secretary of the Trades and Labor Assembly.

Incidentally, the State Federation at its convention adopted a resolution urging all affiliated unions to fully support OEU locals in their efforts to organize office workers in Colorado.

NEW LOCAL

Beaumont, Texas—Organizational efforts among office and clerical workers at Magnolia Petroleum Co., Sun Oil Co., and other concerns have resulted in the chartering of OEU Local 169. Vice President C. A. Stafford, AFL Organizer J. W. Park, Local 133 at Orange and Local 66 at Port Arthur aided in establishing the local.
OPA Head Makes Strong Argument for Wage Boost

Washington, D. C.—Raising the minimum wages of all workers in interstate commerce from the present 40 cents an hour to 65 cents as prescribed in pending legislation would have no significant price consequences, Chester Bowles, price administrator, assured Congressmen.

In testimony before a Senate sub-committee studying a modification of the Fair Labor Standards Act, Mr. Bowles declared that a higher floor for wages was “imperative” to the health of the national economy.

“There need be no hesitation on any one’s part because of the price consequences of this legislation,” said Mr. Bowles.

He was reviewing figures purporting to show that a $14,000,000 rise in the tobacco industry payroll, needed to lift the wage level the 55 per cent of the workers in that industry now get, less than 65 cents an hour would mean about one-tenth of a cent per pack of cigarettes—if the entire increase were taken out of the present price of cigarettes.

Introduction of a 65-cent minimum in the lumber and timber industry—where 54 per cent of the workers get less than that—would increase payrolls by $67,000,000. Such an increase amounts to 43 per cent of the industry’s 1944 profits, Mr. Bowles admitted, but even this cut in profits would leave the industry 690 per cent before taxes above prewar levels, and would yield 10 per cent on net worth—seven times the prewar average.

“Prices that depend upon sweatshop wages are sweatshop prices,” Mr. Bowles said. “The thoughtful consumer would choose to benefit through lower prices if those prices are based on substandard wages,” Bowles said.

His statement that prices in the long run might fall, rather than rise, as a result of the 65-cent minimum were based, he said, on the reasoning that “higher wages increase productivity.”

“A worker who knows that his family is assured a reasonable minimum of existence started that job with new energy and satisfaction. The increase in output per worker, which I believe would surely result from the proposed increase to 65 cents, would in itself go far to pay for the higher wage bill.”

Equal Pay For Women Urged

Washington, D. C.—Elimination of wage differentials based on sex by any employer of more than eight persons engaged in interstate commerce was advocated by Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach, as “not only a matter of fairness to women but also from the standpoint of preserving wage standards and consumer purchasing power.”

“The existence of a group of workers who are employed at uniformly lower wages than are paid to other groups doing the same or comparable work promotes destructive competitive practices and depresses the whole wage structure,” he told a Senate Education and Labor Subcommittee which opened hearings on the Women’s Equal Pay Bill.

Senators Pepper, Democrat of Florida, and Morse, Republican of Oregon, introduced the measure in June.

“I see no basis for making a distinction between men and women workers in this connection. If they turn out the same quantity and quality of work, they should receive the same compensation,” Secretary Schwellenbach said.

Favorable action on the measure was also urged by Miss Frieda S. Miller, chief of the women’s division of the Labor Department.

The AFL has endorsed the objectives of the legislation.
AFL Unions Propose Parley To Promote Better Government

Washington, D. C.—A proposal for a labor-management conference to promote better government was submitted to President Truman by the Government Employees Council of the American Federation of Labor.

In a letter to the President, Foster J. Pratt, Secretary-Treasurer of the council, said:

"In the past, various 'experts,' many of them actually subsidized by large corporations, have managed to set themselves up in the center of governmental operations and to radiate their assumed influence to the best advantage of themselves. Now, that the war is over, it seems entirely possible that this same influence will be brought to bear to set up in the public and influential zones of government. It is the fervent hope of this council that if there are plans or if any plans are being formulated in this direction that the leaders of this council may have the courtesy of a consultation before they are adopted or announced.

"We believe the subject of better government is of such vital interest to the President of the United States that you may want to consider the announcement of and convening at an early date of all leaders of whatever persuasion to general conference in Washington to turn their attention to suggestions for

Interest Shown At Paper Plant

Sheldon Springs, Vt.—Office and clerical workers of the Mississauga Corporation, paper manufacturer, are showing interest in organizing. It is expected that a local union charter will shortly be issued. Cooperation is being provided by the International Brotherhood of Paper Mill Workers in the effort to bring the benefits of collective bargaining to these workers.

CHARTERS ISSUED

Washington, D. C.—Representing further progress among the office workers and paper industry in the Province of Ontario, Canada, two new OEIU locals have been chartered at Kupaskasing and Hawkesbury. AFL organizer Russell Harvey assisted the workers in getting both of these locals under way.

MAP CAMPAIGN

Milwaukee, Wis.—OEIU Vice President Alice Holz attended a conference of international union representatives, AFL organizers and Wisconsin State Federation of Labor organizers which was held to stimulate and arrange for organizational activity in Wisconsin.

Clothing Industry's Strike Forces New Price Boost

Washington, D. C.—The clothing industry has pulled a successful strike against the government and the nation's consumers.

Refusal of the manufacturers to produce lower-priced garments finally forced the Office of Price Administration to grant the industry another 15 per cent increase in selling prices of such merchandise as underwear, pajamas, hosiery, shirts and handkerchiefs.

When labor strikes, the newspapers and Congress go into complaints fits—but apparently it's perfectly all right for industry to employ the same tactics because organized labor was forced to carry on a lone fight against the price increases.

For the past two years the OPA has tried to keep cheap clothing prices at about their 1943 levels, which were, of course, marked away from prewar standards.

The OPA excused its change of policy by pointing out that most of the affected items had disappeared from the market, leaving only the highest-priced merchandise available to consumers. Under the revised order, the OPA said, the lower-priced garments will again become available, although the retail selling prices will be "slightly" higher.

Compulsory Military Training

Washington, D. C.—Lewis G. Hines, AFL legislative representative, stated organized labor's opposition to hasty action on compulsory military training and showed how a strong defense can be maintained without resort to undemocratic measures in the following feature article broadcast on the regular AFL news program:

"President Truman asked Congress this year to enact immediate legislation providing for one year's compulsory military training for all American young men.

"If labor were convinced that such legislation is essential to the nation's defense, we would support it. But we are not so convinced. Therefore, the American Federation of Labor opposes any hasty action on this proposal.

"We would like to know, first of all, does America face any immediate threat of war? If so, how many years of military training are planned to meet this threat? Never before in its history has America resorted to universal conscription in time of peace. What is the situation today?

"The American people have been led to believe that the United Nations were determined to banish future civil wars, and that we must train and keep the peace. Are we ready to admit that this effort is doomed to failure already? We have been assured that the power of Germany and Japan to make war is being
total-destroyed. Is aggression then likely to come from any other nation? Now is the time to find out so that we can deal with it before we get caught by surprise.

"One argument advanced by those who favor universal military training is that it would disprove the nation from making war on us. But European countries have had conscription for many, many years and it has acted as a deterrent to war in those countries.

"Future wars will be fought according to new patterns. The atomic bomb, jet propulsion and other discoveries may make large armies a liability, instead of an asset. The national defense must be planned in terms of the future. We should have a large air force, a large Navy and the finest scientific research organization in the world.

"The American's greatest weapon is its capacity to produce goods of any nation in the world. Plans should be made now to convert our industrial facilities to war needs without delay if a war emergency develops in the future.

"If this program is followed, it will mean invincible protection from safe foreign aggression, without having to subject the nation's youth to the undemocratic experiment of compulsory, universal military training."

Islands Swing To Organization

Honolulu, T. H.—Increasing interest in organization is evident in the office and clerical work in this community and, according to AFL Organizer John Owen, who currently has a campaign under way among such workers, at the request of Organizer Owen, a local union number has been assigned to this city by the International Union and it is anticipated that an application for a local union charter will be filed with the OEIU in the near future.

Name Is Sought For New "Baby"

Tacoma, Wash.—Local 23 is seeking a name for its new baby—a four-page monthly newspaper which made its bow in October.

The next little tabloid is edited by Otilie Markholt and is appearing as the "Office Employees News" until the executive board selects a name and choice from the entries in a prize contest.

One of the articles on the front page tells of the efforts being made to secure wage increases and other improvements for office and clerical workers in Tacoma retail stores. Also on page one is a cartoon by Gale Haner depicting the plight of office workers caught between soaring living costs and stationary wages.

Study Setup For Settling Rows

Washington, D. C.—Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach named a special committee to make recommendations to him on how the Consolidation Service can be most effectively strengthened.

The AFL representative on the committee is John P. Schmitt. AFL Director of Organization.

The committee will examine the policies, procedures and organization of the Labor Department's work in mediation and voluntary arbitration and will work closely with Edgar L. Warren, newly named director of the Consolidation Service.
Standing Firm In Strike At B. & S. (Continued from page 1)

The major testimony in support of the company's plea was that one girl's hair was pulled, one official was struck in the face, and a couple of others had to "squeezed" through the lines. Counsel for the union brought out that one of these men was making a girl picket.

Two mass meetings have been held by the workers. On October 30 they were addressed by President Hutchings, Arthur Devine, president of the State Federation of Labor; James Annable, president of Lodge 1142 of the Machinists, and Robert Coughlin, business representa- tive of the Machinists. Ray Jamieson, president of OEU Local 76, presided.

Lambast Sharpe

On November 8 a crowd of approximately 1,200 heard Congress- man and Laborite Sharp in one of the most prominent anti- union employers in the country.

"We have in Rhode Island today a new champion, not of Rhode Island, but of this entire country, who sits on the throne as the outstanding reactionary in the United States—Henry D. Sharpe," Fogarty declared, addressing a challenge to the Providence newspapers to publish his statement.

The Providence Republican Com- mittee, which is, as a member, requested him to arbitrate the dispute, indicating how the public feels in the matter, but he also turned them down, apparently de- termined to settle the affair only by a court. He also refused a similar plea by Mayor D. J. Roberts.

The congressman suggested that every worker in the state demand a day's pay to the cause and offered to give a day's pay of his own to start the ball rolling.

People Get Facts

International President Hutchings and Federation President De- vine presented to citizens of the Providence area the facts of the dispute in radio addresses.

Hutchings pointed out that the workers left their jobs for a prin- ciple.

"This principle," he continued, "involves a basic question of equity and fair play—a principle so clear to both of them that they have gladly for the first time in their lives left their work and taken their positions in picket lines. The large majority of these workers are girls who have, without hesitation, joined in exer- cising their basic rights to with- hold their services until manage- ment agrees to an equitable and fair settlement of their wage dispute.

Perhaps the biggest reason that the workers wanted organization and chose Local 76 as their collec- tive bargaining agent in the NLIRB election last June was dissatisfaction with their wage rates.

HOW PUBLIC FEELS

How the average citizen of Providence feels about the strike of Brown & Sharpe office and clerical workers was dramatically demonstrated at headquarters of Local 76.

An elderly man walked into the office and laid a roll of currency on the desk of President Jamieson.

"I'd like to make a contribu- tion to the union," he said to President Jamieson and placed the roll of currency on the desk. Jamieson counted the bills. The total was $500.

The warm-hearted citizen accepted Jamieson's profound gratitude, requested that his name not be made public and said, as he left: "I just want to help these people along."

Cities Low Wages

"According to the company's own figures, the average straight-time hourly rate for the entire group of 1,154 office and clerical workers on the payroll as of June 23 amounted to 66 cents an hour and over a third of the total office group was receiving less than 61 cents an hour," he declared.

He related the efforts of the union to better their conditions through the recognized channels of collective bargaining. The company flatly rejected the schedule of wages in the contract proposed by the bar- gaining committee of Local 76 and turned down several other clauses, but agreed to stipulated settlement of these issues by the War Labor Board.

The company made a counter pro- posal, providing little if any improvement in wages. Condi- tion was attempted and the union made further proposals for an amicable settlement, finally offering to sub- mit the matter to arbitrators.

Company's Confession

The company's rejection of arbi- tration testified stronger than words to the inequity and discrimi- nation perpetuated by its counter proposal.

Hutchings pointed out that the union had exhausted all possible means to bring about a settlement without resorting to a strike and had complied fully with all legal requirements.

"The union still stands ready to arbitrate this wage controversy," he declared.

Devine told the radio listeners that "the issue is so simple it could be solved in 10 minutes," and also showed that the company is direct- ly responsible for the workers leav- ing their jobs.

He pointed out that for years in- dustry, business, and organized labor have regarded arbitration as "the philosophy of the ever- improved relationship between labor and management."

"If the company is right in its statement that it will not pay a 65-cent minimum to clerical workers and if it is right in saying that clerical workers are receiving comparable wages to those paid in the area, why then is the company afraid to arbitrate the issue?" he asked.

"The union," he declared, "is not afraid of arbitration and is not afraid to rest its case on facts that would be disclosed if a panel or single arbitrator tackled the prob- lem of settling the dispute."

"A 65-cent minimum is reason- able and would assist every worker in meeting the rising cost of living. In the behalf of the clerical workers, the company is afraid to arbitrate the issue, and that is the company afraid to arbitrate the issue?"

At the conclusion of the debate, the company's representative pointed out that the proposal did not want full employment, preferring a pool of idle labor to keep pressure on wages, and that some contradictions were made.

President Truman's continued pressure for action and Secretary Vinson's charge that he was investigating something like a filibuster against action in the committee appeared to have had some effect, but not much. Mr. Manasse said:

"If the issue has been brought to a vote today the committee would have tabulated all the pending measures."

On the committee are Repre- sentatives Manasse, chairman; Cochran and Whittington of Missis- sissippi, Democrats, and Bender of Ohio and Hoffman of Michigan, Rep- publicans. Only Mr. Cochran has supported the President's desires on the measure, although Mr. Whit- tington has said that he would like to vote some sort of compromise measure.

Sign Agreement With Paper Firm

Mobile, Ala.—Local 71 reports that it has negotiated and signed an agreement with the Southern Kraft division of the International Paper Company. (Note: The paper was signed at the request of the employer.)

Specifications on the contract were handled by A. R. Carson, a vice president of the International Union.

The provisions are the same as those in the pact recently secured by Lo- cal 50 for the Panama City, Fla., operations of the company.


dor contended the Florida law is ar- bitrary and discriminatory against nonunion workers.

The AFL declared 100,000 em- ployees are working in Florida un- der union-security agreements. Whether Florida can enforce such a law, it said, "is a matter of gravest importance to the 14,000- some members of organized labor in this country."

Closed shop agreements, it con- tended, are the only means for workers to insure job security, protection from employer discrimina- tion, equality of bargaining power and protection of working standards against nonunion wage competi- tion.

Union Shop Ban Before High Court

Washington, D. C.—The United States Supreme Court agreed to pass judgment on the anti-union shop amendment to the Florida state constitution adopted a year ago. The test case was instituted by the American Federation of Labor and the Florida State Federation of Labor.

However, the high tribunal may limit its decision to the technical question as to whether a federal district court exercised proper jurisdic- tion when it upheld the valid- ity of the amendment.

If the Supreme Court should de- cide that the district court exceeded its authority, the latter's decision apparently would be nullified.

The American Federation of Lab- Full Employment Bill Is Handed To Sub-Committee

Washington, D. C.—The House Expenditures Committee closed nearly seven weeks of hearings on "full employment" legislation by setting up a subcommittee, which Chairman Manasse "hopes" will draft some sort of a compro- mise measure.

At least three of the five have strongly opposed sections of the three pending bills, the counterpart of the one originally offered in the Sen- ate, the Senate's modified draft and an elaboration of the original offered by Representative La Fol- lette, of Indiana.

Secretary of Labor Schwellen- bech, appearing at the final hear- ing, declared that some opponents of the proposal did not want full employment, preferring a pool of idle labor to keep pressure on wages, and that some contradictions were made.

President Truman's continued pressure for action and Secretary Vinson's charge that he was investigating something like a filibuster against action in the committee appeared to have had some effect, but not much. Mr. Manasse said:

"If the issue has been brought to a vote today the committee would have tabulated all the pending measures."

On the committee are Repre- sentatives Manasse, chairman; Cochran and Whittington of Missis- sissippi, Democrats, and Bender of Ohio and Hoffman of Michigan, Rep- publicans. Only Mr. Cochran has supported the President's desires on the measure, although Mr. Whit- tington has said that he would like to vote some sort of compromise measure.

Portland Local Launches Paper

Portland, Ore.—A four-page "Memo" paper, "Office Memo," is being pub- lished monthly by Local 11, under the supervision of Secretary- Treasurer Irving Enna.

One of the feature articles in the November issue announces that a majority of the clerical employees of Portland Gas & Coke Company have signed up with the union and another reports that a request for double-time payment for overtime has been made in behalf of clerical workers at the Kaiser shipyards.

The "Memo" also reports that two members of Local 11, Miss Jane Dunn and Mrs. King, were maid and matron of honor at the launching of the S.S. Mount Rogers at the Kaiser Vancouver yards. Mrs. of third, wife of the secretary of the Metal Trades Council, was chosen as sponsor of the ship in recognition of the out- standing support and efforts of members of the union affiliated with the Council during the war period.