UNIONISM GROWS IN UTILITY FIELD

Portland, Ore.—The office and clerical workers employed by the Pacific Power and Light Company will soon be able to obtain the benefits of union recognition and collective bargaining, according to Secretary-Treasurer Irving Enna of OEU Local 11, which has been conducting an organizational campaign among these workers under the able direction of Ruth Flood, business representative of the local union.

Initial conferences have already been held with officials of the company and of the NLRB relative to working out an NLRB election. The Business Representative Flood has been working closely with the clerical staff of this company and has indicated that the workers are anxious to obtain recognition of their union. It is expected that organized bargaining negotiations with the company will move on the part of the company in granting wage increases in salaries and double time for overtime after an election has been requested.

Growing unionism is indicated by the number of electric, gas, and water workers reported covered by OEU agreements which have brought job improvements to the office and clerical workers of utility companies. Substantial wage increases have been realized by these workers in wages, hours, and working conditions through collective bargaining agreements which have been struck with their respective local unions. The office workers of the large Toledo Edison Company have voted to ratify the wage and working conditions agreements with a reported doubling of their rates since organization.

The Tampa (Florida) office workers have been successful in obtaining wage improvements in each of the annual contracts since their organization in 1944 as well as obtaining hours, overtime, and other employment benefits. The office staff of the various organized offices of the Public Service Co. of New Jersey have won gains through organization. This story is repeated many times in all sections of the country.

Substantial Wage Increases Secured

Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.—General wage increases ranging from 80,50 to 125 per cent, the minimum wage structure highlight the recent renewal agreement between the Consolidated Wisconsin Power and Power Co. and OEU Local 95, according to Harry R. Keenan, president of the local who, together with the committee, office workers, participated in the negotiations.

In behalf of the National Committee for the Extension of Labor Education, OEU Vice Pres. R. M. Daugherty presented to Alvin Yetter, president of OEU Local No. 1 in Indianapolis, the $75 prize which he won in the nation-wide essay contest conducted by the committee to boost legislation sponsored by the committee. From left to right: Mrs. Hallo Lee, Vice President Local No. 1, R. M. Daugherty, International Vice President Lewis M. Vogler, Secretary-Treasurer Local No. 1, Alvin Yetter, President Local No. 1, Mabel Valadin, National Secretary Local No. 1. Yetter’s essay appears elsewhere in this issue of The Office Worker.

Rights of Workers Upheld In Battle with Spencer Co.

Tampa, Fla.—OEIU Local No. 46 won a stipulation settlement of its NLRII case against Spencer Auto Electric Company, and one member who had been discharged because of his union activities received $500 from the company to cover loss of pay suffered by him as a result of his discriminatory discharge.

Under the terms of the settlement three additional office employees were ordered to be immediately and fully reinstated to their former positions without prejudice to their seniority or other job relationships.

The company was also ordered to post a notice indicating that it will comply with these representations and that it would not interfere with, restrain or coerce its office employees in the exercise of their rights to self-organization and to join or assist OEU Local No. 46.

The notice also gave the employees that they are free to become or remain members of Local No. 46 and will not be discriminated against for the company because of such membership or activity.

This stipulation settlement brings to an end one of the bitterest fights against organized labor in Tampa, which resulted when the office employees of this company organized into Local No. 46 almost two years ago.

OEIU Vice-President J. O. Bloodworth who is also Business Representative of the local led the fight in bringing this company into compliance with the law and obtaining for this office staff their legal rights to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing.

BARGAINING UNIONISM GROWS IN UTILITY FIELD

The Office Worker

Official Organ of the Office Employees International Union of the A. F. of L.

WASHINGTON, D. C.. JANUARY, 1948

No. 37

BIG WAGE HIKE WON IN FOOD CONCERNS

Oakland, Calif.—A general wage increase of $3.50 per month highlighted gains made in the renewal agreement between OEU Local No. 28 and the food industry in this city, according to Business Representative John B. Kinnick, who conducted the negotiations for the local union.

The wage increases and improvements obtained are retroactive to October 1 and have resulted in an average wage of $215 per month for the more than 100 employees affected.

Negotiations have also been completed with Chanosol and Lyon Company, according to Business Representative Kinnick, and the members employed by that firm have gained a $25 per month increase retroactive to October 1, with an additional two days vacations after two years and an additional week’s vacation after three years over and above the previous vacation allowances.

Pact Negotiated With Health Plan

New York City—OEIU Local No. 153 has negotiated a new contract with the Empire Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York bringing substantial benefits to the office and clerical employees.

Some of the highlights of the pact are a 35-hour work week, two-week vacations after six months of service; three-week vacations after one year of service, improved sick leave provisions, a well-defined grievance procedure and a cost of living increase of $4.50, retroactive to September 1, for all employees in service prior to January 1.

Also the contract stipulates that job classification and a plan of progression increases shall be set up and put into effect as of January 1.

The negotiating committee was composed of Jean McIntyre, Maurice McKay and Milton Old. Business Manager Howard Coulgin and Business Representative Harry Avrutin assisted.

Election Won At Continental Can

Chicago—with only one dissenting vote Local 28 won an NLRB election among the office workers of the Continental Can Company, according to Business Representative Sarah Keenan, who is also an OEU vice-president.

Representative Bloodworth indicates that the local union will continue its efforts of collective bargaining to the office employees of this firm who now have been assured that the company will cease its discriminatory practices.
Boost Labor Service Bill

Indianapolis, Ind.—Trade unionists in all parts of the country boosted the Labor Service Extension Bill in an essay contest conducted by the National Committee for the Extension of Labor Education, sponsored by the AFL. The contest produced in both towns and cities the spirit which Congress is slated for hearings soon after the new session begins.

Alvin L. Yetter, president of Local No. 1 of the Office Employees International Union, was awarded third prize for his essay, which appears below.

The Permanent Committee on Education of the AFL cooperated in the preparation of the bill, which embodies the principles approved by the 132nd convention.

Briefly, the bill establishes in the Department of Labor a Labor Extension Service which would operate through a cooperative plan between the department, colleges and universities and groups of wages and salary earners requesting the service.

The service would include classes and discussion groups; works on subjects important to workers and their families; institutes; research projects, help with conferences and exhibits.

Teacher would be available for instruction on labor history, labor economics, collective bargaining, labor journalism, labor-management relations and civic activity programs.

WHY I AM ASKING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO VOTE FOR THE LABOR EXTENSION BILL

By Alvin L. Yetter, President of Local No. 1

In this broad and pleasant land of ours fertile valleys and fruitful plains dominate landscapes that once were swampy and desert. Wheat, corn, and cotton grow in soils and climates that were once considered unproductive. New growing areas which once were barren and infertile now yield crops which once were impossible. What are the lessons of these miracles? What affected these revolutionary changes which have added immeasurably to the wealth of our nation? The answer is simple: knowledge. With the aid of federal funds, colleges have experimented and pioneered and learned. They have made these advances available to the common farmer, and armed with this new knowledge, he has gained more and more efficiently. He has produced more and consequently contributed more to the commonwealth.

In commerce too, better methods and better statistics have made extra-ordinary changes. As in farming, federal aid to colleges has opened broad new avenues of progress to the business men of the nation. New knowledge has enabled them to get more done with less effort; to cut time-wasting corners; and to avoid unnecessary risks and costs.

Now Congress has before it a measure (S.1390) to make available to organized labor the brains and research facilities of the nation's colleges. Better industrial relations and lasting industrial peace are two prime requisites of the nation. Before they can be achieved, better understanding, wider vision, and more comprehensive thinking must inspire both labor and management. And these things are more than a proposition on paper, they are found in the proving of students, with lectures, labor extension, and conferences.

The American labor movement, that grew in the self-same universities and colleges, must prepare itself to meet the challenge of the new facts.
URGES COMPULSORY
HEALTH INSURANCE

New York City.—Compulsory health insurance legislation is a development which promises success in the task of providing adequate medical care for the great mass of citizens of this country.

This was the view expressed by Bernard M. Baruch, well-known and respected labor economist, who was named to the government's national advisory council on health insurance under President Hoover's Proclamation, at a meeting sponsored by the Medical Society of New York.

Stating that he did not fear Government taking "its legitimate part in medicine, any more than in education or housing," Mr. Baruch chided the doctors for their obstructionist attitude in fighting the expansion of medical care to all.

He said: "In the matter of adequate medical care, too many doctors have been fighting against what medical profession has justly earned great influence in the community. It can keep that hold on the public until it is too late. It will lose that hold if it has nothing but objections to offer, if it has eyes only for what not to do."

Terming a health or social citizenry as the "greatest asset of any nation," Mr. Baruch declared that voluntary plans for medical care are not good enough to achieve this goal. He declared:

"What we need most are the needs of that sizeable segment of society, which does not earn enough to pay for voluntary insurance."

"The American Medical Association, its Bureau of Medical Economics, estimated in 1938 that families earning $3,000 or less, two-thirds of the population, cannot afford the cost of serious illness. Some of these families can be covered by group insurance, although inflation has reduced their number. But of what little follow-through is there?"

"Nothing has been suggested so far, which promises success, other than some effort at covering these people by law and financed by the Government, at least in part."

Mr. Baruch criticized the tactics of many doctors in attempting to portray the issue of medical care as a choice, "all black or all white." Objecting to this oversimplification, he declared that medical needs of the people are "in constant change, and the Government taking over medical".

He said: "All laws engender compulsion. A form of compulsory health insurance for those who cannot afford to pay for voluntary insurance can be devised, adequately safeguarded without involving what has been termed socialized medicine.

THE OFFICE WORKER

Cost of Modest Standard
Of Living Exceeds $3,000

Washington, D. C.—What it costs a family of four to achieve a modest standard of living in the most expensive city in the country is the subject of inquiry of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

The budget prepared through two years of careful study ranges from $3,458 in New York, N. Y., to $2,890 in Minneapolis, Minn. The cost in Washington, D. C., is $3,938, or about 9 per cent higher than that of New York.

The bureau said: "A family of four can live in Washington, D. C., as well as in New York, if it has an income of $5,000."

The bureau said the following are the totals for the minimum cost of food, clothing, and other needs of a family of four: $3,458 in Washington, D. C., $3,458 in Chicago, Ill., $3,458 in San Francisco, Calif., $3,458 in Buffalo, N. Y., and $3,458 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Two Union Shop Elections Won

Chicago.—In two union shop elections conducted on the same day, OEU Local 28 plied up overwhelming votes in the general office unit, and the NLRB office unit, by the vote of 91 to 8, according to Business Representative Sarah E. Meck, who is also a Vice President of the OEU.

Business Representative Keenan also advises that the office staff of the Automatic Electric Company is rapidly signing up for membership in Local 28. A substantial majority have already signed cards and the local has petitioned for an NLRB election and the company does not have bargaining rights for this group.

NEW GAINS WON

Durham, N. C.—Recently completed renewal agreement between Local No. 84 and the Wright Automatic Machine Company brought further gains to the membership employed in this office, according to Business Representative R. C. Carson, who assisted the local union officers in the renewal negotiations. Among other things a general 5 cents per hour wage increase was obtained for all employees, and in addition some individual classification changes were agreed to.

Join the March of Dimes

The 1938 March of Dimes, which takes place January 15-30, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. During the two weeks people in every corner of the nation will have a chance to do something for every child by paying 10 cents for the privilege of sponsoring a child.

The march is an opportunity to see what a child might do for the nation if paralysis were not a handicap in his life. If the child is paralyzed, the march is an opportunity to see what one child has done during the past five years.

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Steel Products

Election Won

Richmond, Calif.—With 85 per cent of all eligible clerical workers voting in favor of union representation, the NLRB has established its bargaining rights at the California Steel Products Company through an NLRB election conducted last month.

The outcome of this group was handled by local Organizer Charles Petersen. The local union at the receipt of results has already petitioned the NLRB to conduct a union shop election and to make it possible for the local to negotiate a union shop contract, according to John K. Killick, vice president and manager.

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VOTE UNION SHOP AT FREIGHT LINES

Portland, Ore.—In rapid succession, OEIU Local 11 has won NLRB union shop elections conducted among the office employees of four major railroad companies, reported Irving Enna, Secretary-Treasurer of the local union.

The employees of the Consolidated Freightways voted 108 to 7 for the continuation of the union shop shop in Portland, Oregon, for a three-year period, and among Inland Motor Freight, Oregon-Nevada-California Fast Freight, and the Portland company, elections also received an overwhelming majority of the votes for the union shop.

Enna reports that negotiations are under way with these companies on the remaining unsettled issues of wages, vacations and sick leave provisions.

Union Shop Tests Won at 3 Firms

Minneapolis, Minn.—Within a period of a year, the American Local of OEIU Local 12 at Minneapolis participated in three NLRB union shop elections, each of which resulted in obtaining a 100 per cent vote in favor of the union shop clause.

The elections were conducted among the office employees of the Continental Baking Co., a wholesale bakery, and among the office employees of one of the local offices of Consolidated Freightways, two over-the-road freight hauling firms, according to the reports of local Business Representative Arthur J. Fritz who handled the cases for the local union.

Wages Increased At Publishing Co.

Fort Smith, Ark.—In its renewal agreement with the Southwest Publishing Co., OEIU Local 190 won a general 10 cents per hour wage increase for all covered employees, according to Local Union President Joe Walford, who announced the settlement.

The agreement covers the Circulation Department Manager's unit of the employees. In addition to the general increases gained in the wage schedule, the agreement also provides for a 40-hour week with time and onehalf for all overtime work, paid vacations, provisions for car allowance and for the arbitration of any grievance not satisfactorily settled through grievance procedure.

Frisco Transport Wages Boosted

St. Louis, Mo.—All office employees of the Frisco Transportation Company except one who was away at the time, participated in the Union Shop Election conducted by the NLRB, and 100 and 100% voted for the Union Shop in St. Louis and Kansas City, according to A.F.L.-OEIU Representative L. B. Leaton, who assisted in this election.

The new agreement negotiated with this company provides for a $1.15 an hour across the board increase to all office employees.

All-Out Political Drive Approved by AFL Unions

Washington, D.C.—In an historic move, the American Federation of Labor has authorized its political organization will follow in its efforts to out the foes of labor, organization, the Congress and the state legislatures.

More than 200 top officials of the AFL's 106 national and international affiliates and its officers here, formally organized "Labor's Educational and Political Service League," to be headed by chairman, President William Green declared.

Commenting upon the step taken by the AFL, its first venture into the political arena on a large scale, Mr. Green characterized the action as "historic" and an intensification of the old labor policy of "re- warding our friends and punishing our enemies." He voiced Labor's determination to fight for the repeal of all anti-labor legislation and said the organization of the political league became necessary "because the 1948 Congress has fastened its shackles on labor." George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the AFL, told the conference that establishment of the league was not a departure from the AFL's political policy but was an effort to fight "the spooks" in the light of modern conditions.

He predicted success for the AFL political undertaking and declared that labor's foes will find "that you cannot step on the people and get away with it indefinitely.

Election Won At Pillsbury Mills

Ogden, Utah.—OEIU Local 220 was designated as the exclusive bargaining agency for the office force of Pillsbury Mills Incorporated (Globe Mills) as a result of an NLRB election conducted last month and in which a substantial majority of the office force was represented by the local union.

Following an election conducted by the NLRB for it to conduct a union shop election so as to allow for the development of a unit union over a 30-day period, as provided for in its proposed agreement with the company.

Union Shop Won At American Radiator

Elyria, Ohio.—By an overwhelming majority vote, OEIU Local 177 has won an NLRB union shop election among the office employees of the firm. Elyria Radiator, based in nearby Sanitary Manufacturing Company plant, according to OEIU President R. M. Daugherty, who assisted the local union in preparing for this election.

The union shop clause has already been negotiated with the company and as a result of the union shop election vote all eligible employees of the firm will be required to become and remain members of the local union for a period of thirty days, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement.

Consumer's Price Index Hits New Record High In November

Washington, D.C.—The Bureau of Labor Statistics sketched another chapter in its series of reports on the rising cost of living with the release of preliminary figures for the month of November. These showed the smallest increase in 29 months that Modern times.

Families residing in the nation's large cities paid almost 1 percent more for goods and services bought in November than they did in October. The rise was 0.1 per cent.

Following last month's decline, food prices rose more than 3 per cent between mid-October and mid-November. According to preliminary figures, the food index for mid-November is estimated at approximately 1 percent above mid-October, the 1935-39 average, slightly below the peak reached in September 1947, and 39 percent above the mid-June 1946 level. Sharp increases in prices of cereal and bakery products, fats and meats, and dairy products contributed to the mid-Novem-

Port Edwards, Wis.—The office employees of the Paper Mills Organizing Company are rapidly organizing a new OEIU local union in the cities of Nekoosa and Port Edwards, Wis., according to reports of OEIU Vice President Alice Holz who has been assisting the group.

A local union charter has been applied for and the group is moving forward rapidly in building membership among the office employees of the company.

In addition to the assistance of Vice President Holz, the newly formed group is receiving active help from I. J. Hofschultz, Secretary of the Port Edwards Central Labor Union and H. D. Daugherty, president of OEIU Local 95 at Wisconsin Rapids. The group is also receiv- ing active support and cooperation of the local union of the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers among the office workers.

Vernon Rustler, who has been elected temporary president of the new local and is an employee of the National Loan and Fire Insurance Company, a division of the City of Nekoosa and past president of the local Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers Union.

Employes of Paper Mills Organizing

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