

THE OFFICE WORKER

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

No. 37

WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY, 1948

7

UNIONISM GROWS IN UTILITY FIELD

Portland, Ore.—The office and clerical workers employed by the Pacific Power and Light Company will soon have an opportunity 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 NLRB election details. 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 and commence bargaining negotiations with the company. A move on the part of the company in granting a 9.7 percent increase in salaries and double time for overtime after an election had been requested has served to graphically illustrate to the office workers that organization brings job improvements.

Utility Organization Growing

The number of electric, gas, water and traction companies covered by OEU agreements which have brought job improvements to the office workers of such concerns is growing, according to International President Paul R. Hutchings, who indicates that during the past few years the office and clerical workers of utility companies have been rapidly awakening to the fact that they can obtain substantial improvements in wages, hours and working conditions through collective bargaining through their OEU locals. The office workers of the large Toledo Edison Company have proved the value of bargaining with a reported doubling of their rates since organization. The Tampa (Florida) Electric Company office workers have received substantial wage improvements in each of their 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 \$6.50 to \$12.50 per week in the minimum wage structure highlight the recent renewal agreement between the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co. and OEU Local 95, according to Harry R. Klappa, president of the local who, together with the committee, participated in the negotiations.

Gets Essay Contest Prize



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. Hallie 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

Mrs. Lois Valodin, Recording 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.—OEU Local No. 46 won a stipulation settlement of its NLRB case against Spencer Auto Electric Company, and one member who had been discharged because of his union activities re-

ceived \$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 rights and privileges.

The company was also ordered to post a notice indicating that it would comply with these requirements 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 advised the employees that they are free to become or remain members of Local No. 46 and will not be discriminated against by 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.

OEU Vice-President J. O. Bloodworth who is also Business Representative of the local lead 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.

INTERSTATE UTILITY WORKERS VOTE OEU

Oakland, Calif.—In a sweeping victory, OEU Local No. 29 established its exclusive bargaining rights for the office and clerical employees of the Interstate Utility Corporation at an NLRB election held last month.

Upon the request of the employees involved the local union has already petitioned the NLRB to conduct a union shop election thus giving it the right to negotiate a union shop clause in its agreement with this company.

Local union Organizer Jim Sander has handled the organization of this group and negotiations will soon be under way for a working agreement which, it is believed, will be a pattern for other agreements of this type in the area.

On the evening prior to the election a pre-election get-together was held at the local union headquarters. As a gesture of good will the office supervisory personnel who were not eligible to vote were also invited and did attend. Refreshments were served.

BIG WAGE HIKE WON IN FOOD CONCERNS

Oakland, Calif.—A general wage increase of \$22.50 per month highlighted gains made in the renewal agreement between OEU local No. 29 and the food industry in this city, according to Business Representative John B. Kinnick, who handled 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 Chanslor 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 vacation 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—OEU Local No. 153 has negotiated a new contract with the 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 September 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 Coughlin and Business Representative Harry Avrutin assisted.

Election Won At Continental Can

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

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

THE OFFICE WORKER

Official organ of the
OFFICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION

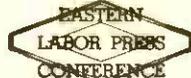


PAUL R. HUTCHINGS, *President*
J. HOWARD HICKS, *Sec.-Treas.*

1221 G Street, N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

Entered in the Post Office at Washington, D. C., as second-class mail matter.



Reproduction by the Labor Press of any or all of the material herein contained is not only permitted but wholly desirable in the interest of workers education.

Subscription Price, \$1 a Year

INFLATION CAUSING DRAIN ON SAVINGS

Washington, D. C.—American wage earners, fighting a losing battle against soaring prices, have been forced to dip more often into savings in efforts to make ends meet.

Holders of \$25, \$50 and \$100 government war bonds are cashing them in ever-increasing numbers as the cost of living rises.

This is the hard fact the U. S. Treasury faces as it prepares to launch, with approval of the Republican Congress, a new bond-selling campaign to siphon off inflationary dollars.

The Treasury's figures on bond sales and redemptions indicate the new campaign's success will rest largely upon the persons who in the past were able to purchase \$200, \$500 and \$1,000 bonds—and farmers.

The \$25, \$50 and \$100 market apparently is almost gone.

In the last year, 89,000,000 \$25 bonds were redeemed as compared with only 46,000,000 sold. Of the \$50 denomination, 18,000,000 bonds were cashed as against 11,000,000 sold, and 11,000,000 \$100 bonds were cashed as against 8,000,000 sold.

While redemptions of the smaller Series E savings bonds were far exceeding sales, the opposite was true of larger denominations.

One million \$200 bonds were sold as compared with only 189,000 cashed. And of the \$500 and \$1,000 denominations, 2,000,000 of each were sold as against 1,000,000 of each cashed.

AFL RADIO PROGRAM SHIFTS TO NEW TIME

Washington, D. C.—Commencing January 4, the American Federation of Labor shifts its radio activities to a new program entitled "America United," a half-hour round-table discussion of pertinent and timely topics of interest to labor and the nation.

The program, originating from Washington, will be heard from

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, sponsor of the measure which has been introduced in both houses of Congress and 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 1946 AFL 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 wage and salary earners requesting the service.

The service would include classes and discussion groups for workers who want to know more about their everyday problems in industry and their communities; institutes and forums, motion pictures, library services, research projects, help with conferences and exhibits.

Teachers would be available for instruction on labor history, labor economics, collective bargaining, labor journalism, labor-management relations and civic and community 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 swampland and desert. Wheat, corn, and cotton grow in soils and climates that were considered unsuitable even a generation ago. Two blades of grass now grow where none grew before, and farming has become less arduous and more prosperous.

What brought about these miracles? What affected these revolutionary changes which have added immeasurably to the wealth of the nation? The answer is simple: knowledge. With the aid of federal funds, colleges have experimented and pioneered and learned. They have made their discoveries available to the common farmer, and armed with this new knowledge, he has farmed better and more efficiently. He has produced more and consequently contributed more to the common welfare.

In commerce too, better methods and better statistics have made extraordinary changes. As in farming, federal aid to colleges has opened broad new avenues of progress to the businessmen 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 pitfalls.

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 the exclusive by-products of better education. Therefore, I am urging members of Congress with all the sincerity at my command to work for, fight for, and support the Labor Extension Bill known as S.1390.

Bargaining In Good Faith Promotes Industrial Peace

St. Louis.—The AFL's Central Trades and Labor Council here released a report which emphasizes the fact that collective bargaining in good faith promotes industrial peace.

The council selected the 12-month period from August, 1946, to August, 1947 (just prior to the effective date of the Taft-Hartley law) for its analysis.

It showed that in plants under agreement with the AFL unions, labor relations during the year were "99.49 percent perfect." In other words, for each 100 man days on the job, only 51/100 of 1 percent was lost through strikes.

"Our survey disclosed that union-employer relations in this area are

1-1:30 p. m. each Sunday over the nationwide network of the National Broadcasting Company. Consult your local newspapers for the exact time of the broadcast in your community.

getting better right along," declared John I. Rollings, executive secretary of the council.

A significant factor in the industrial peace record, Rollings said, is that most of the plants are functioning under some form of "union security" agreement.

The council's breakdown showed that 40 percent of the agreements call for "closed shops"; 56.9 percent for the "union shop"; 1.66 percent for "maintenance of membership," and a mere 1.37 percent for "recognition only" without any union membership requirements.

Whether such a record can be maintained during the next 12 months hinges, Rollings added, on how much havoc will be caused by the Taft-Hartley law's ban on the "closed shop" and its curbs on the "union shop."

CONVENTION ACTION OF BOARD APPROVED

Washington, D. C.—In accordance with the unanimous decision of the OEIU Executive Board, which was approved by substantially more than two-thirds of all local unions voting in referendum, there will be no annual convention of the Office Employees International Union in 1948.

Announcement of the results of the vote on the matter was made by President Paul R. Hutchings and Secretary-Treasurer J. Howard Hicks in letters to all local unions. The next regular convention will be held in March, 1949.

Stewards Attend Lecture Series

Oakland, Calif.—The stewards and officers of Local No. 29 have participated in a series of 5 lectures arranged through the courtesy of the Milk Wagon Drivers Union, Local 302, and dealing with union problems.

The lectures were held at the University of California over a period of 5 weeks and gave the officers and stewards of the local an opportunity to participate in discussions on such subjects as: How collective bargaining works, How the trade union operates; The Taft-Hartley Act; and other pertinent subjects, with lectures by outstanding members of the University of California and Mills College staff, and by Attorney Tobriner.

DISPUTE NOTICES SWAMP SERVICE

Washington, D. C.—Notices of labor disputes being filed with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service are nearly 3 times more numerous than the number of notices received last year under the old War Labor Disputes Act.

This was revealed by Cyrus S. Ching, director of the Federal service, in an announcement that the agency would cease to acknowledge receipt of "30 day dispute notices" filed as required by the Taft-Hartley law. The practice of notifying the other party that a notice of a dispute has been received will also be discontinued, Ching said.

The act obligates an employer or union seeking to modify or terminate a contract to give a 60-day notice to the other party prior to the expiration date of the agreement. In addition, another notice, to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and the appropriate State or Territorial agency must be filed if the dispute has not been settled within 30 days thereafter. It has been the policy of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to acknowledge receipt of all such dispute notices and to advise the other party involved that such a notice had been filed. However, it has been determined that the continuance of the practice is administratively impracticable.

Mr. Ching said that copies of such notices will continue to be furnished regional directors of the service for final disposition.

URGES COMPULSORY HEALTH INSURANCE

New York City.—Compulsory health insurance is the only method 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 philanthropist and advisor to the Government on many national problems, before a group of prominent doctors attending a meeting sponsored by the Medical Society of New York State.

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 a rear-guard action for too long. I feel I must warn those doctors, time is running against them. The medical profession has justly earned great influence in the community. It can keep that hold only as it moves forward. 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 healthy educated 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 troubles me 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 1939 that families earning \$3,000 or less, two-thirds of the population, cannot afford the cost of serious illness. Some of these can afford voluntary insurance, although inflation has reduced their number. But what of the little fellow who cannot?"

"Nothing has been suggested so far, which promises success, other than some form of insurance 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 over-simplification, he declared that medical needs of the people can be met "without the Government taking over medicine." He said:

"All law imposes 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."

Steel Products Election Won

Richmond, Calif.—With 85 per cent of all eligible clerical workers voting in favor of union representation, OEIU Local No. 29 established its bargaining rights at the California Steel Products Company through an NLRB election conducted last month.

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 various American cities has been figured out by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

The budget prepared through two years of careful study ranges from \$3,458 in Washington, D. C., most expensive city in the country, to \$3,004 in New Orleans, the least expensive, as of last June. Now the cost is at least 3 per cent higher.

It is readily apparent that it does not provide luxurious living or for putting anything aside for a "rainy day." Neither does it provide for the purchase of a new car when the present jalopy wears out.

It highlights the "squeeze" in which the families of workers are caught. In October the average weekly earnings of factory workers were only \$50.97.

The budget is based on the kinds of goods and services workers' families actually select. It is not what they "ought to buy."

As the "budget family," the BLS assumed a husband who was the sole breadwinner, a wife who spent her full time at household duties without outside employment, a boy of 13 in high school, and a girl of 8 in grade school.

It then priced the food the family bought if it satisfied the National Research Council's recommended nutritional standard of about 3,000 calories a day average per person; and assumed a private family dwelling of five rooms, with private bath, kitchen and hot and cold running water, but without telephone.

For the rest—clothing, medical care, transportation, recreation, taxes, tobacco, barber shops, school costs and the like—it took a level at what it called a "point of resistance." This is a point below which families ought not to fall.

The budget provided about 2 pounds of all kinds of meat per person per week, or about two-thirds of the average per capita consumption. It allowed for such few purchases of higher priced cuts and poultry that a turkey or good piece of meat could be had only on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. It gave 12 quarts of milk, 6 loaves of bread and 20 eggs a week.

It allowed less than one pack of cigarettes every two days; a little better than three phone calls and one letter a week; one movie every two weeks for the boy, one every three weeks for the others; one haircut for the father every three weeks; two house dresses for the wife a year, one coat every four years; about four doctor's calls a year per family.

This is the first manufacturing plant office of its type to be organized into Local No. 29.

The organizing of this group was handled by local Organizer Charles Petersen. The local union at the request of the employees involved has already petitioned the NLRB to conduct a union shop election among this group, thus making it possible for the local to negotiate a union shop contract, according to John B. Kinnick, business representative of Local No. 29.

The Bureau did not study the costs for families of two, three and five persons, but presented an estimate for Washington. For the family of five it is 14 per cent higher.

Following are the totals for the 34 cities surveyed as of last June:

Washington, D. C.	\$3458
Seattle, Wash.	3388
New York, N. Y.	3347
Milwaukee, Wis.	3317
Boston, Mass.	3310
Detroit, Mich.	3293
Pittsburgh, Pa.	3291
Minneapolis, Minn.	3282
Chicago, Ill.	3282
San Francisco, Calif.	3317
Baltimore, Md.	3260
St. Louis, Mo.	3247
Mobile, Ala.	3276
Norfolk, Va.	3241
Memphis, Tenn.	3220
Los Angeles, Calif.	3251
Birmingham, Ala.	3251
Richmond, Va.	3223
Cleveland, Ohio	3200
Portland, Me.	3200
Denver, Colo.	3168
Philadelphia, Pa.	3203
Scranton, Pa.	3163
Savannah, Ga.	3150
Portland, Ore.	3161
Atlanta, Ga.	3150
Buffalo, N. Y.	3136
Jacksonville, Fla.	3135
Manchester, N. H.	3132
Cincinnati, Ohio	3119
Indianapolis, Ind.	3098
Houston, Texas	3020
Kansas City, Mo.	3010
New Orleans, La.	3004

Two Union Shop Elections Won

Chicago—In two union shop elections conducted on the same day, OEIU Local 28 piled up overwhelming votes among the general office and the production clerical workers employed at the J. O. Stoll Company last month. The production workers unit voted for a union shop with 60 yes and 3 no votes. The general office unit also approved the union shop clause by a vote of 91 to 8, according to Business Representative Sarah E. Keenan of the local union and who is also a Vice President of the OEIU.

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 to establish its exclusive bargaining rights for this group.

NEW GAINS WON

Durham, N. C.—A recently completed renewal agreement between Local No. 84 and the Wright Automatic Machinery Company has brought further gains to the membership employed in this office, according to OEIU Vice President A. R. 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 1948 March of Dimes, which takes place January 15-30, marks the tenth anniversary of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. During the two weeks of the drive Americans in every walk of life will put their dimes and dollars on the line so boys and girls, stricken by polio, may regain the most priceless possession of youth—a healthy childhood.

In contrast to 1916 when the nation suffered its most staggering blow from infantile paralysis, the present day finds fear replaced by confidence, and panic dispersed by knowledge.

Through public participation in the National Foundation's annual appeal, all are guaranteed prompt and adequate aid when polio strikes. The National Foundation's 2,735 chapters serve every county in the nation, and the local chapter stands ready at all times to render every possible assistance to the people of its community.

Chapter services, made possible through your contributions to the March of Dimes, include: Payment of hospital bills, doctor's, physical therapist and nursing fees, transportation to and from hospital or clinic, medical follow-up charges; and, where indicated, provision for orthopedic appliances.

During the past 10 years the National Foundation and its chapters have aided some 88,000 Americans stricken by polio. The disease, unfortunately, is on the increase in the United States. The past five years marked the highest polio in-

cidence for any similar period in history.

The 1947 polio outbreak, while less severe than the epidemic of 1946, nevertheless was above the average annual total. Cost to the nation of the 1946 epidemic eventually will total some \$30,000,000, without taking into account additional millions needed to pay for last summer's outbreaks when some 10,000 people were stricken.

Infantile paralysis is one of the most expensive diseases known to medicine. The average cost per case is \$2,000. Few people—in fact scarcely one out of ten—can afford the expense entailed in caring for even a fairly mild case of infantile paralysis, and some families have had several of their children stricken with this disease.

However, through participation in the March of Dimes, it is possible for everyone to aid the National Foundation in keeping its pledge that no infantile paralysis patient need go without the best possible medical care for lack of funds, regardless of age, race, creed or color.

March of Dimes money does even more than this. Scientific research at 78 leading institutions throughout the land is seeking a preventive or cure for polio. The March of Dimes is paying the bill for these investigations.

Infantile paralysis will strike again. But America will be able to strike back hard by your participation in the March of Dimes this January.

VOTE UNION SHOP AT FREIGHT LINES

Portland, Ore.—In rapid succession, OEIU Local 11 has won NLRB union shop elections conducted among the office employes of four motor freight lines, according to Irving Enna, Secretary-Treasurer of the local union.

The office employes of the Consolidated Freightways voted 108 to 7 for the continuation of the union shop clause in their contract. At Inland Motor Freight, Oregon-Nevada-California Fast Freight, and Rand Truck Line the union also received an overwhelming majority of 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 five days last month OEIU Local 12 at Minneapolis participated in three NLRB union shop elections and in each was successful in obtaining a 100 per cent vote in favor of the union shop clause.

These elections were conducted among the office employes of the Continental Baking Co., a wholesale bakery, and among the office employes of the Union Freightways and 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 Company OEIU Local 182 won a general 10 cents per hour wage increase for all covered employes, according to Local Union Secretary-Treasurer R. E. Walker. The agreement covers the Circulation Department Manager's unit of the company. In addition to the increases gained in the wage schedule the agreement also provides for a 40-hour week with time and one-half 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, Missouri.—All office employes of the Frisco Transportation Company except one who was absent at the time, participated in the Union Security Election conducted by the NLRB, and 100% voted for the Union Shop clause in the contract between OEIU Local No. 13 and the Company, according to AFL-OEIU Representative Frank E. Morton, who assisted in this election.

The new agreement negotiated with this company provides for a \$.15 an hour across the board increase to all office employes.

All-Out Political Drive Approved by AFL Unions

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

More than 200 top officials of the AFL's 105 national and international unions, at a special conference here, formally organized "Labor's Educational and Political League" and called upon the AFL's nearly 8,000,000 members for voluntary contributions of a minimum of \$1 each to finance its undertakings.

Plans for the league call for an intensified drive to get out the labor vote in 1948 and to inform AFL members concerning the position taken by candidates for election on the Taft-Hartley law and other vital problems affecting organized labor. A report embodying these purposes and setting forth details of organization and operation of the league was submitted by the AFL Executive Council and unanimously and enthusiastically approved by the conference.

AFL President William Green was named chairman of the league and George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the AFL, was elected to a corresponding position in the political organization.

The meeting set up a national committee composed of the AFL Executive Council and the presidents of the 105 national and international affiliated unions. This committee will have general supervision over the activities of the organization.

To direct its operations, the league will have a 30-member administrative committee consisting of the AFL Executive Council and 15 additional members. This committee was authorized to expand its numbers as circumstances dictate by the appointment of not more than 5 additional members.

Swinging into action immediately following the general conference, the administrative committee met and authorized Mr. Green and Mr. Meany to appoint 43 subcommittees on finance, organization, and the selection of an executive director for the league. These committees are scheduled to report to the administrative committee at its next meeting expected to be held before the end of the year.

To carry the organization down to the "grass roots" level additional working committees will be set up by the national unions and their local affiliates, state federations, and city central bodies.

Funds in the form of voluntary contributions will be raised by the national and international unions. Half of the suggested \$1 minimum contribution will be turned over to the national league with the other half remaining for use in the area in which the contribution was made. The league may reallocate its funds for use in any state or congressional district where conditions warrant the use of a greater sum than that normally retained in the area.

The program for the league leaves the way open for cooperation with "non-Communist organ-

izations" which see eye-to-eye with the AFL on political issues. This rules out cooperation with the CIO at the national level, AFL 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 Gompers policy of "rewarding 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 a reactionary 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 meant to give effect to that policy "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 consent election conducted last month and in which a substantial majority of the office force voted for representation through OEIU Local 220, according to Local President Donald G. Merrill. The local is presently petitioning the NLRB for it to conduct a union shop election so as to allow for the negotiation of a union shop clause in its proposed agreement with the company.

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. They told the same old story.

Moderate-income families residing in the nation's large cities paid almost 1 percent more for goods and services which they purchased on November 15th than for the same goods and services bought a month earlier, the BLS declared.

The consumers' price index for November 1947 was estimated at about 165 percent of the 1935-39 average, a new all-time high. The index was more than 8 percent higher than a year ago, about 24 percent above mid-June 1946, and 67 percent above August 1939.

Prices advanced in November for all major groups of items. Preliminary estimates show that average

EMPLOYES OF PAPER MILLS ORGANIZING

Port Edwards, Wisc.—The office employes of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. are rapidly organizing a new OEIU local union in the cities of Nekoosa and Port Edwards, Wisc., 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 employes of the company.

In addition to the assistance of Vice President Holz, the newly formed group is receiving active help from I. J. Hofschild, Secretary of the Port Edwards Central Labor Union, and Harry Klappa, president of OEIU Local 95 at Wisconsin Rapids. The group is also receiving the active support and cooperation of the local union of the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers and of the Paper Makers.

Vernon Ruder, who has been elected temporary president of the new local and who is an employe of the company, is also Mayor of the City of Nekoosa and past president of the local Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers Union.

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 employes of the American Radiator and Standard 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 employes covered by the agreement will be required to become and remain members of the local union upon the expiration of thirty days, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement.

retail prices of fuels were up nearly 1½ percent; apparel, house furnishings, and miscellaneous goods and services increased somewhat less than 1 percent. Rents were fractionally higher.

Following last month's decline, food prices rose more than ½ percent between mid-October and mid-November. According to preliminary figures, the food index for mid-November is estimated at approximately 203 percent of 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, dairy products, and fats and oils contributed to the mid-November increase. Higher prices were also reported for fruits and vegetables, coffee, and sugar. Meat prices declined seasonally.