Wage spurt highlights first pact

As a result of vigorous bar-
gaining by Local 29, Oakland, Calif., wage gains ranging from $660 to $1,800 a year were won in a first contract for its new unit of office employees at Western Grocery, a Di Giorgio Corporation subsidiary.

Wage increases range from $55 to $150 per month, says Senior Business Representative Joe Nedham, with an additional $20 per month effective on March 1. The pact also provides a union shop, dues checkoff, an additional paid holiday, a pension program, and the local’s Health and Welfare Plan. Stella Ferguson, a member on withdrawal, spearheaded the organizing drive.

Season’s Greetings

As we end the decade of the 1960s and stand on the threshold of the 1970s, the officers and Executive Board of the Office and Professional Employees International Union extend their greetings and every member in the United States and Canada our warmest personal wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year.

We look forward with renewed faith to even greater growth of the white-collar union movement in the coming year, strengthened by the knowledge that we can count on your fullest cooperation.

Howard Coughlin, President
J. Howard Hicks, Secretary-Treasurer

Vice-Presidents
J. Oscar Bloodworth
Ronald F. Bone
John P. Cahill
George F. Polit
Sarah E. Keenan
John Kelly

Arthur Lowandowski

National Sealand agreement raises wages 28 percent

A nationwide three-year contract bringing in average 28% wage boost to 80,000 office employees of Sealand Services, Inc., a giant transportation shipping concern, has been negotiated by New York’s Local 153.

The Sealand pact covers office employees in New York and Brooklyn; Port Elizabeth, N.J.; Baltimore, Md.; Mobile, Ala.; Houston, Texas; Emeryville, Calif.; and San Juan, Mayaguez and Ponce, Puerto Rico.

The OPEIU is now organizing other Sealand office employees in Seattle, Wash.; Jack-
town, Miss.; and Philadelphia, N.C.

A first-year 10% wage in-
crease, 8% the second year, and 7% the third, plus automatic increments every six months of $2.50 to $3.10—depending on grade—begin in the agreement.

For some individuals, wage gains range from 42.7% to 46.9% during the period, according to Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer John Kelly.

Other gains include cumula-
tive sick leave to 100 days, a 15% shift-differential for white-collar employees required to work before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m., and a guaranteed Christmas bonus for all employees including those now in U.S. military service.

All Sealand’s unionized office employees are included in Local 153’s $315,50 Health-Welfare Plan (or equivalent local plant) with all costs paid by the employer.

This provides payment for office, home and hospitalized medical and surgical care, and for diagnostic laboratory and X-ray services, anesthesia, ambu-
sance service, visiting nurse serv-
ces, physiotherapy and electro-
shock therapy, in-hospital psy-
chiatric care, and prescription drugs.

1 1/2 million in gains won at Knights of Columbus

What Local 329 members in New Haven, Conn., describe as a “Cadillac of contracts,” winning for 360 office employees average wage gains totaling more than $1,700, has been negotiated with the Knights of Columbus—largest fraternal insurance organization in the world. Average individual wage gain is $335 weekly over a three-year period.

International Representative Bud Manning, who headed the negotiating team, estimates that the total package in wage gains and fringe benefits will cost the employer $1 1/2 million.

The pact provides a first-year pay hike of 8%, with an additional 7% in each of the following two years. It retains automatic progression from minimum to maximum with raises every four months, bringing the lowest clerical grade to $108 a week by 1971, and the top grade to $197.

K. C. office employees will also receive two extra paid holi-
days, raising the total to 11.

No room at top for women

If you think that big busi-
tess doesn’t discriminate against women when it comes to pro-
motion—think again, you have a shock coming.

According to a study by the Social and Business Adminis-
tration of Sacramento State Col-
lege, the boards, presidents and vice presidents of 71 industrial corporate grants did not include a woman.

Further union growth underscored

Organizers report school board and public service successes

Additional victories in union-
izing white-collar workers in various office fields in Canada and the U.S. also continue the inflow into OPEIU ranks of public service employees and secretaries of boards of educa-
tion.

Business Manager “Check” Armitage of Local 6, Boston, reports that clerical employees of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority voted by an over-
whelming 5-to-1 majority for unionism in a recent election.

Life was assisted in the orga-
nizing campaign by an energetic committee comprising: Richard Freeman, James Holmes and Leo Leary.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, a white-collar unit at the Metropolitan Bus Authority chose the OPEIU by a 2-to-1 vote ac-
cording to International repre-
sentative Julio Corra.

From Detroit, Mich., Presi-
dent Mabel Hollerson reports that Local 42 has won handle an election among 140 secre-
taries of the Birmingham Board of Education.

Regional Director Romeo Corbel says that interest in white-collar unionism in Eastern Canada continues to grow among secretaries of boards of education in that area. Two additional groups were orga-
ized recently.

One is a 68-member unit or-
ganized by Local 57, Montreal, at Baldwin Carrier Regional School, and the other an 80-
member unit at Gauge Regional School.

Corbel added that applica-
tions for union recognition have also been filed with Quebec Labour Boards for three addi-
tional Board of Education units, comprising approximately 200 school secretaries. Two other applications for certification have been filed for hospital office workers. The hospital groups total almost 100 em-
ployees.
WHITE COLLAR

Delegates required 6% interest

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Nixon's letter to the nation's

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Rep. Charles

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AFL-CIO

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Labor Secretary George P. Shultz told the AFL-CIO convention recently that the median wage increase (after adjusting for the rise in consumer prices) has been just under 2% in the first year of the agreements negotiated in the past year. The following figures indicate clearly what is causing inflation:

Between 1960 and 1968: Corporate profits, after taxes, increased 91% (an average yearly gain of 10.1%). Dividend payments to stockholders increased by 84% (an average yearly increase of 9.3%).

After taxes, the take-home pay of non-supervisory workers in the period increased 31% (an average yearly increase of 3.4%).

In terms of buying power, the increase in nine years amounted to 11%, or about 1.2% a year.

Demands for wage increases are obviously based on prior increases in the cost-of-living. Unions seek in bargaining to offset the rise in living costs and to gain some advance in our standard of living. If such objectives are not reached, a continuing rise in living costs puts real earnings further behind.

Another tax dodge—

use money, pay later

Rep. Charles A. Vanik (D-Ohio) comments that "every day turns up a shocking new tax loophole which increases the burden on the average taxpayers who marks were made in the House as he disclosed a big loophole that hasn't been publicized in the popular press.

He cited Internal Revenue Service figures showing that interest on delinquent taxes owed to the United States by individuals and corporations hit a massive $567 million in fiscal 1969. The figure indicates a total tax delinquency for the year of $95 billion.

Rep. Vanik explained that many rich people and corporations are deliberately letting their taxes ride and paying the required 6% interest penalty.

In turn, they invest the money (unpaid taxes) in operations returning 8 to 12% interest.

Thus, said the congressman, the delinquent taxpayer makes a big profit "at the expense of all other taxpayers who pay their bills." Moreover, the delinquent can write off the 6% interest he pays to the IRS against his current taxes.

"This reward for delinquency," Vanik said, "adds a cruel insult to the average taxpayer who has to pay his tax bill through payroll deductions before it is due."

What's Causing Inflation?

In last month's White Collar we printed the text of President Nixon's letter to the nation's business and labor leaders on the question of inflation. He called specifically on labor unions to "base their wage demands on the new prospect of a return toward price stability."

The rise in living costs, however, can be slowed only by changes in the price and profit policies of American business. Rising prices are washing out all or most of the buying power of workers' collective bargaining gains of the past several years.

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A Mr. Smith of the AFL-CIO (Newark, N.J.) told the meeting that the rise in living costs is "first and foremost a business problem," and that from his own experience in negotiations he had found that labor and management were both willing to seek a solution of that problem.

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Delegates attending the Southeast Educational Conference in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Business seen trimming costs

Although business is good and corporation profits remain high, many concerns are sharpening the ax in the belief that leaner times are near, notes The Wall Street Journal. They are closing some plants, laying off white-collar workers, and trimming advertising and public relations budgets.

The Nixon administration has said it will continue its inflation-fighting policy of tight money, and many economists say this could bring on the first real recession in eight years. Organized labor has been sounding similar warnings in recent months.

There are others, of course, who see nothing but good times ahead. But even if these optimists are right, some corporate officials say it won't hurt to cut back on budgets now, anyway, because they tended to get out of hand in the boom years. Their primary target is the white-collar worker who is generally non-union, as straw in the wind show:

Chrysler Corp. recently announced it was trimming down its 40,000-member white-collar force.

Smith Kline & French, the Philadelphia pharmaceutical company, has fired 90 middle-management and staff people and halted efforts to fill vacant posts. In all, it is wiping out about 200 white-collar jobs.

Leeds & Northrup, a Pennsylvania firm which makes precision measuring instruments recently did away with 200 management and other non-production positions among other items at an annual saving of $2 million. It explained that many of the "nice but not essential items" were white-collar people. Hence, the firings.

"The good news is I'm in the vanguard of the fight against inflation—the bad news is I'm fired."

World-famous TV and film star Dina Merrill graciously con-

sented to answer OPUE mem-

sters' questions on beauty and grooming. Address questions to Dina's Column, c/o Dick Moore and Associates, Inc., 200 West 57th Street, New York City 10019.

Dear Dina:

With the holidays coming, I always get the urge to look extra special. I wear rather tailored clothes, so I wouldn't be comfortable wearing a fancy dress or elaborate makeup. Can you suggest an alternative for entertaining this season? Marilyn F.

Dear Marilyn:

Every hostess this year should have a hostess gown. Why not invest in a really good looking full length dress? Add a bright scarf and maybe a few chains and you'll look not only elegant, but feminine as all get out. And if you really want to get yourself a gift, find a hairpiece or fail that's a different length than your hair, and you'll feel even more festive. This is a great all-year-round investment. If your hair needs a set or shampoo, you can always just stick a Fall on, and presto you're instantly in shape to go anywhere. For traveling, and in summertime, they're life savers.
The case for signing up with the OPEIU

Some vital statistics

And an ode with a moral

What's a union contract worth to the average employee?

Exactly $2,371 in 1966 (or an extra $1.14 an hour), says a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study entitled "Employee Compensation in the Private Non-farm Economy."

That was the difference in average hourly wage compensation of non-office workers in establishments with union contracts compared with those without union contracts.

Today the dollar spread is certainly greater because the 1966 data was the latest available when the government compiled its report. Part of the difference was in the basic straight-time wage rates.

The average union worker made $2.62 an hour, against only $1.88 for the non-union employee, says the survey.

Union workers also got substantially more vacation time, holidays, pension rights, health and welfare insurance, and other fringe benefits. These hiked hourly compensation (the total amount paid out by employers) to $3.37 an hour, against $2.23 for non-union employees.

Because the union employee works fewer hours, due to longer vacations and added holidays, the difference is even greater if measured in terms of total hours worked. The U.S. figures for this category boost the union differential to $1.29 and widen the non-union worker's edge.

Some union representation elections are lost by thin margins because management convince captive audiences that they "have nothing to gain" from union contracts, that unions seek "only to collect dues." The government study exposes this fiction.

Usually, union dues per year are only about $71 of the $2,371 figure cited. Thus, the average gain for the union employee is a fat $2,300, or a 3,240% profit on a trivial investment.

AFL-CIO calls on unions to support GE strikers

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has called on the entire labor movement to rally behind the 150,000 strikers of 13 unions at 280 General Electric plants in 33 states across the nation. It is urging every union member to contribute $1 cash to support the G.E. strikers.

"We intend to help the GE strikers win," the council said. "G.E.'s management, stockholders and customers should heed this warning: The only thing that will end the strike is a decent, honorable, realistic contract. This is a strike of a new labor movement. It is a strike we will not lose."

Meanwhile, GE is taking full-page ads in newspapers across the nation railing about its "generous" offer to its employees. But a recent U.S. court of appeals decision brandied GE's 1960 "take-it-or-leave-it" offer to one union at displaying "an absence of subjective good faith."

The federal court found that among other things, GE offered its employees a personal accident insurance program at that time which tended to undermine the position of the union.

The court noted that GE's attitude toward supplying information to the union was characterized by a pettifogging insistence on doing not one whit more than the law absolutely required, in instances that eventually strayed over into doing considerably less.

The court also rejected GE's contention that it failed to supply data on future pension and insurance costs because they were "merely speculative" and only "educated guesses."

The difficulty with this stand, the court said, "is that it would excuse the company from furnishing virtually all information of which it was not absolutely certain."

Local 15's new bakery Unit off to fast start

An outstanding first contract has been negotiated in Vancouver, B.C., by Local 15 for a new unit of office employees at McDonald's Consolidated, Ltd., bakery suppliers to Canada Subway Stores. The union won a basic starting salary of $390 a month, for a 37½-hour workweek, in the lowest mail and file clerk grade.

A 304 an hour across-the-board boost in all grades will bring the starting salary to $439 on July 1, 1970, and to $489 on July 1, 1971. This represents $122.25 per week, substantially above the $100 starting minimum set by the OPEIU as its goal for all young office workers. The top grade goes from $553 to start, to $710 a month after two years.

The pact calls for a union shop with dues checkoff, and provides for nine paid holidays and improved vacations—three weeks after three years and five after 15. It establishes seniority, grievance procedures and arbitration; sick leave cumulative at the rate of a half-day per month to a 10-day maximum, as well as group insurance.

Recurrent speculation in the press that the problem of inflation may be "solved" by a Wage Freeze—cold war on working people, you might say—has stirred the Muse in one of the union's many talented members. Hereewith his rhyming verses. 

"A Chilled Canto for Clericals," it might be titled.

Are you grasping for cash?
Do you bustle into rush
At the thought of another Wage-Freeze?

Do you scrimp, do you scrape?
Have your clothes lost their shape?

You're the victim of White-Collar Squeeze!

Do you scrimp, do you scrape?
Have your clothes lost their shape?

You're the victim of White-Collar Squeeze!

Are your Savings declining?
Your Bankers repining?

Is your self-respect down on its knees?
Is it merely bad luck

That you're poverty-stricken?

You may tell like a slave,
Put one foot in the grave,

Do your utmost the "bosses" to please;
But you won't get more money

More bees and more honey
Till you've all organized in the OPEIU and

Broken the White-Collar Squeeze!

Contract sets 3-ply pension deal

American Export Lines' 300 office employees, under a two-year contract negotiated by Local 155 in New York, will enjoy a major pension when they retire—company, union, and Social Security.

The company agreed to bring into its plan some 78 employees not previously included by paying for all past service credits. The contract also provides wage gains and other fringe benefits estimated at "better than 15%." The previous average weekly salary was $125.

Retroactive to November 1, the past calls for a 7½% wage raise with another $2 in May, plus a 7½% raise next November 1 with a further 5% weekly raise in May, 1971. Additional gains are guaranteed holidays on the last working days before Christmas and New Year and on the employee's birthday. The agreement also calls for improved sick leave, four weeks vacation after 10 years, and a tuition aid program.

In another two-year shipping company contract, negotiated by Local 3 in San Francisco for some 50 clerical employees of States Marine Insurance Agency, Inc., wage gains totaling from $960 to $1,380 were won, plus doubletime for overtime.

Effective November 1, the agency agreed to pay $53 per employee each month into the Local 3 Pension Plan, with an increase to $68 on November 1, 1971. The employees also agreed that where holidays under the new federal law become part of a weekend holiday, they shall be observed on such weekends.

Local 28 scores at General Mills

Wage gains ranging from $45 to $67 a month, with an across-the-board bonus increase in the second year, were scored in a two-year contract negotiated by Local 28 for office employees of General Mills, in Chicago, Business Representative Clyde Brezinski reports.

Other gains were a complete revision of job classifications; new language concerning technological changes; a no supervisory working clause; improved grievance procedure; an extra paid holiday; an improved insurance benefit program, and better conditions for those working as vacation fill-ins.

The negotiating committee included John Dwyer, Larry Brook- er, Floyd Glover, and Howard Millhaff. They were assisted by International Representative Bill Adams and OPEIU Midwest Council Representative Bill Cox.
Unions eye prepaid vision care

Prepared vision care may be as common within five years as prepayment of hospital and surgical expenses is today, and the same holds for prescription drugs.

These are predictions made at the annual educational conference of the National Foundation of Health, Welfare and Pension Plans recently held in New York City, in panels discussing new frontiers of health-care package for collective bargaining. I notice that such provisions are now appearing in some newly negotiated OPEIU contracts.

On the basis of the rapid growth of vision care plans in recent years, Fred L. Beachler, executive vice president of Vision Institute of America, Inc., made the prediction. He said he believes such programs will have a strong appeal for both sides at the bargaining table.

He pointed out that union groups are responsive because it is a negotiated benefit which every employee and dependent uses during the life of a contract, and "it is used extensively." He added that management also has found that adequate vision care significantly increases employee efficiency. This is particularly true for office workers.

The American Optometric Association formed the Vision Institute in 1964 to oversee and coordinate vision care programs throughout the United States. Beachler cited several examples of the "dramatic" growth of prepaid vision care programs in recent years. These are:

- California Vision Services, the first to organize a corporation offering an optometric-sponsored prepaid program. By June 1967 this program covered 100,000 individuals with an annual premium cost of $3 million, processing approximately 3,500 claims a month.
- Washington Vision Services covered 1,027 employees with $20,000 premiums in 1964, and by 1967 reported $900,000 in annual premiums, for 38,000 employees.
- Vision Services, Inc., operating in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, reported 67,000 covered in September 1968 and $500,000 in premiums, against 6,200 in January 1965 and $25,000 in premiums.

Optometrists, according to Beachler, have formed state service corporations in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

Cost of such programs depends upon who is covered and the type of coverage, partial or complete. Beachler added: "The prepaid vision service corporation cost for complete coverage program on a composite family basis ranges from $3 to $4 a month, depending on the character of the group and its physical location. The holds is usually two cents an hour, providing all first quality professional services, materials, and no unpaid balance for the member to pick up."

Beachler emphasized the need for vision care programs. He said that American Optometric Association studies show that of the total U.S. population, 42% has normal vision, 30% has been cared for adequately, 17% needs help, 10% has improper correction, and approximately 5% has unacceptable defects. "Thus," he pointed out, "40 million people could benefit from vision care annually."

Speakers participating in the prescription drug plan session pointed out widespread utilization and need in this health area. Benjamin D. Ward, president of Pharmaceutical Card Systems, Inc., said: "The healthy employee with the healthy family need not longer complain about never receiving any benefits from his plan, for almost every family—healthy or not—requires prescription drugs from time to time."

Samuel X. Kaplan of Prepaid Plans Inc. made this comment about need: "Prescription drugs 20 years ago represented about 2% of the health care dollar. They now represent about 20%. A family in 1950 filled an average of one prescription a year. Now, as therapeutic drugs assume an increasingly important role in medical care, the average family fills ten. With an average prescription cost of $5, the typical American family thus has an annual drug bill of $50."

Both speakers said that the average family's annual prescription drug bill works out at about two cents an hour in union contract terms, Kaplan adding: "The real challenge is obtaining a program that can be administered economically."

Local 3 gains $1,260 increase at record firm

Wage boosts of $1,260 a year, plus bereavement leave and a more liberal vacation plan, were won by Local 3 in a new three-year contract negotiated with Capitol Records Distributing Corp., San Francisco.

A $42 a month across-the-board raise took effect November 1, with $31.50 set aside in each of the following two years. Members will now be entitled to four weeks' vacation after 15 years, and three paid bereavement days in the event of death in the family.

The employer also agreed to increase payments to the Local 3 Pension Fund by $4.56 a month starting last November 1, and by another $4.55 on the same date next year. Paid holidays now observed on a particular calendar date will be observed on Friday or Monday as designated by the federal or state government.

Another improvement is that paid time not lost but, such as holidays, vacations, sick leave, funeral leave and funeral leave and jury duty, shall be considered as time worked in qualifying for benefits other than wages in the new agreement, says Secretary-Treasurer Philip Mitchell.

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Pierce named at Local 388

Former Local 423 officer Robert A. Pierce has been named Business Manager of Local 388, Cincinnati, by its Executive Board. He succeeds Jay Porcaro, who has been appointed an International Representative.

A former employee of the First National Bank in Chillicothe, Pierce plans to stress organizing bank employees in the Cincinnati area. He says his five years with the bank have taught him that "the personal problems of bank employees can be solved only by understanding them."

He received intensive training at OPEIU headquarters prior to his appointment.

SIGNING $1/4-MILLION PACT: Seated from left: Judge Harold J. Lambsey, Supreme Advocate of Knights of Columbus; Virgil DeChant, Supreme Secretary; Dr. John W. McDavitt, Supreme Knight; International Representative "Bud" McNally and Local 329 President James Lee. Standing from left: Charles Ducey, Deputy Supreme Knight; Dr. John Griffin, Supreme Physician; Local 329 negotiators Raymond O'Connor, Dorothy Venderame and Chief Steward James Lee.

McNally heads new committee

Secretary-Treasurer Florence E. McNally of Local 28, Chicago, Ill., has been named chairman of a new women's labor committee set up in cooperation with the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor in that city.

The committee will serve as a clearing house for the bureau, formulating plans and coordinating women's activities to further their cause in the field of organized labor.