Progress report:
3 units organized

Three organizing efforts have succeeded in establishing new bargaining units in California, Oregon, and Vancouver, B.C., in Canada.

The largest unit comprises 48 office employees of Copeland Lumber Company in Portland, Oregon, who Local 111 won an overwhelming victory in an NLRB election by a vote of 20-0-8.

In San Francisco, Local 3 won a 17-member unit in another NLRB election involving employees of Fred Meyer of California with a vote of 11-0-2. One vote was challenged and three failed to vote.

Although a six-member unit was established at McDonald's Consolidated Bakery, Ltd., in Vancouver, B.C., by Local 15 some time ago and was certified by the Labor Board, management fought back with two futile attempts to have the unit decertified.

Meanwhile, the original unit continued to grow until its membership totaled 26. Recognizing that it had lost the fight, management consented to bargain with the enlarged unit, International Representative Brian James reports.

Executive board actions

Award honoring H. B. Douglas to bring $500 and plaque

At its recent meeting the Executive Board increased the memorial prize established in honor of the late Henderson B. Douglas to $500, to be awarded annually along with a plaque to the OPEIU member who makes the greatest contribution to the union in the area of organizing. The award was originally established by the Executive Board at its meeting in New Orleans last December.

Douglas was the International Union's Director of Organizations until his death last year.

The Board heard a report from President Howard Coughlin which showed that our organization is continuing to grow in the United States and Canada.

Unionism on Wall Street

Stock Exchange unit gains wage jump under new pact

The New York Stock Exchange and OPEIU Local 205 (United Financial Employees) in a marathon bargaining session agreed on a new contract providing for basic pay increases ranging from 15% to 17 1/2% over 2 1/2 years.

The local represents about 75% of the exchange's 2,100 workers, and is the OPEIU's largest single bargaining unit. The new pact provides for abolition of the quarterly bonus, based on trading volume, and converts it into a flat 18% salary increase instead. This gain will be reflected in increased pensions and health and welfare benefits, according to Local 205 President John R. Kret.

The issue of basic wages had been the last major hurdle in negotiations, whose final sessions required participation of two Federal mediators. International Representative Gene Dwyer was assigned by President Howard Coughlin to assist the 22-member negotiating committee.

Agreement was reached on scrapping the volume bonus and other major issues, including an improved vacation schedule, was reached but negotiations deadlock on the issue of basic pay. The exchange offered an 11% increase, but the union successfully held out for the 15% across-the-board figure.

The old contract expired at midnight, May 3, but was extended by both parties until midnight, May 31.

The new pact calls for raises in three steps over its 30-month life. There are immediate increases, retrospective to May 4, ranging from 6% to 7%. The higher figure is for those working 40 hours, the lower for those working 32 1/2 hours weekly.

The union originally had sought a shorter workweek for the 40-hour group.

A 4% to 5% raise occurs on March 1, 1970, and a 5% to 6 1/2% boost on January 3, 1971. There is a 10% pay differential for those working the evening and night shifts.

OPEIU makes 'The News'

International Representative Justin Manning recently brought the attention of two million readers of the Daily News, New York City tabloid, to the existence of the OPEIU. A letter from him headlined "Champion at Work" appeared on the editorial page in "Voice of the People." It read:

"West Haven, Conn.: A recent Voicer bemused the fact that no one was speaking for the 'little people,' among whom he listed the office workers of New York City. May I point out that there is in New York a strong and vocal force for those 'little' office workers. Local 153 of the AFL-CIO Office & Professional Employees International Union. More than 13,000 members can attest to the effective representation this organization has afforded them."
Pateary to $462 retroactive reform means a "how-to-do-it" kit for revenues and paying lower executive salaries protest. We seek to improve their status urged $16 billion annually, the The "unionize because their study finds that increased earnings were a gold mine for their families and most women need the money they earn. Of the women who worked in 1966, about two out of every five were either single, widowed, divorced, or separated. Nor is work a passing fancy, although the length of a woman's working life varies, of course, with marital status and number of children. Even at age 35, the married woman who has borne her last child, and is in the work force, can expect to work another 24 years on the average. 

Same Story in Canada What applies to women who work in the U.S., also applies to their sisters in Canada. Professor Stanislav Judek, an economist at the University of Ottawa, finds that the Canadian government has not "made full use of the talents and qualifications of women" in staffing the public service. 

He finds that white women in public service get just as many promotions as men, they earn a lot less than men. That's because most women are concentrated in the lower-paid occupations, he says.

The median salary for Canadian men was almost 34% higher than the median salary for women. The median salary for men at September 1966 was $5,350, while the median rate for women was $4,000, Professor Judek reports in his book, "Women in the Public Service: Their Utilization and Employment,"

Local 153 extends bakery pact to N.J.

Office employees at Continental Baking Company's locations in Hoboken and Paterson, N.J., were recently brought under Local 153's contract thereby achieving big wage gains and parity with their co-workers in New York City.

The benefits include wage increases of 9% and 6.5%, broken into four increments; all minimums and maximums increased by similar amounts, and (a) an hour wage increases every six months for new employees until they reach their maximum.


Three boosts at U.S. Pipe

The 27-month unit of Local 179 at U.S. Pipe & Foundry Company, in Chattanooga, Tenn., won a 6 1/2% pay raise retroactive to February 24; a similar raise, effective May 4, 1970, and 16 1/2 hours an hour increase on May 3, 1971, in a new three-year agreement.

On the 1971 date the contract will bring the local office salary to $462 a month, ranging to $576 monthly after six years, according to Local 179 President W. Charles Harris.

Improved fringe benefits include an additional paid holiday for the day after Thanksgiving, a new check-off clause and more liberal insurance benefits. The company also agreed to post job openings for a two-day period. Formerly, employees learned of job openings only after they were filled.

Another new clause grants up to two years' leave of absence for employees selected for full-time local union work, or work with the International. The settlement followed a work stoppage in which the office unit and five production unions were jointly involved.

Local 363 President Clara Harris signs new contract with Day & Zimmerman, Inc., at the Lone Star Automotive plant in Texarkana, Texas. Vice-President Jerry Poore looks over her shoulder, and to her right are Gil Glover, committee chairman, and E.C. Rothrock, secretary-treasurer. Agreement brought substantial wage advances and fringe benefits.
Blue Shield employees: Organize! Many complaints are coming to the OPEIU from Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees about low wages and unsatisfactory working conditions. Advice to them is to organize nationwide in our white-collar union. Substantial groups of their fellow employees already have done so in Newark, N.J., Buffalo, N.Y., Montreal, Canada, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. If you belong to one of these organizations, call your local and arrange for a representative election allowing a majority at each location to choose our union as their bargaining agent.

OPEIU message taken to Blue Cross offices The employees are stirring
In all parts of the country the OPEIU is receiving numerous complaints from Blue Cross/Blue Shield office employees that their salaries remain low and that they lack job security. They work long hours under trying conditions, high personnel turnover, and a serious shortage of office help. As trainees come and go, the trained new employees are available only to untrained clerical help. Their old habits of extravagant spending, thus the greatest burden, thus little is left over for the State. Or again, in other words, healthy employees display their health insurance agency. As a result, Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees display mounting interest in the rapidly expanding white-collar union movement.

Campaigns to organize them have already been launched in New York and other cities. The OPEIU goal is unionization of all 75 Blue Cross/Blue Shield offices in the U.S. and Canada. The OPEIU believes that every health insurance employee is entitled to a collective bargaining agreement, guaranteeing not only job security but a living wage, provisions based on seniority and ability, proper working conditions, as well as standard union grievance procedures to iron out injustices to individual workers. The OPEIU platform for Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees emphasizes that the future of an individual employee should be based on his productivity, on the favorability, paternalism or personal whim of his supervisor or arbitrary management. This union also believes that wages and working conditions should be spelled out in a formal contract freely negotiated at the bargaining table between Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees in the future face new and growing problems that only white-collar unions can solve.

The OPEIU record
Blue Cross/Blue Shield management and the OPEIU are not strangers to each other across the bargaining table. In fact, the OPEIU is the only union that has won contracts with this health insurance agency. It is uniquely familiar with the everyday problems of these particular employees.

Our oldest bargaining unit is that covering 500 Blue Cross/Blue Shield office employees of Western New York in Buffalo. This unit was established in 1951 by a membership of 200. It has more than doubled in size. The unit's newest OPEIU contract, covering 500 bargaining unit workers, won a 21% wage increase over the next three years, plus a cost-of-living adjustment. The current agreement will continue another 2% minimum increase each in the three years. Altogether, this means a $1,000-a-year minimum wage increase each year.

Moreover, what was formerly an automatic wage progression to the midpoint scale now becomes fully automatic to the maximum rate under the new contract.

Other OPEIU bargaining units exist among Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees in Newark, N.J., Montreal, Canada, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Other health insurance agencies such as Group Health Insurance (GHI) and Health Insurance Plan (HIP) in New York City are also unionized and enjoy equally beneficial OPEIU contracts.

What the OPEIU has done for these unionized health agency workers, it can also do for every Blue Cross/Blue Shield employee in 50,000 offices across the country. Once it is designated as bargaining agent by a majority of eligible employees at each location, OPEIU representatives are in a position to organize in our union is fully protected by national laws in both the U.S. and Canada, respectively.

Based on these figures, it is estimated that premiums for union members paid to Blue Cross/Blue Shield reach the staggering total of more than $5 billion a year. Usually, profit-making business concerns treat their best customers with dignity and respect. But individual management of this non-profit health agency still exists in a peculiar anti-union bias.

This is due to the fact that Blue Cross/Blue Shield local

Facts on finances

The vast majority of Blue Cross/Blue Shield office employees are unaware that this health insurance agency handles billions (not millions) of dollars annually. These wages are, for the most part, health premiums paid for some 15 million union members. Actually, these premium dollars are what we refer to as the agency's payroll.

Moreover, the Federal government and its employees jointly contribute another half-billion dollars annually in health premiums, besides the vast sums spent by employers for Blue Cross/Blue Shield office employees-500 office employees in the U.S. and Canada. The OPEIU pledges them every assistance where possible in their efforts to organize in our union as their bargaining agent.

Wherever organizing committees are formed, such groups should be aware that they are merely exercising their individual rights, protected by Federal law such as:

• The right to negotiate an OPEIU and ask others to join.
• The right to distribute union leaflets to fellow-employees on their own time but away from the health agency's property.

To protect their rights against being threatened or fired, bargaining unit workers are urged to provide their union with complete information on management policies and to contact the local of Blue Cross/Blue Shield policies.

OPEIU representatives are available to guide them in organizing, to help protect their rights under the law, and to arrange for a representation election allowing a majority at each location to choose our union as their bargaining agent.

$1,040 advance won for unit in St. Paul Business Representative H. R. Marksman of Local 12 in St. Paul, Minn., reports that Consolidated three-year contract making it benefits for office employees in the truck transportation industry.

Wage rates over the period are increased $1,040 per unit, a 27% wage gain made by businesses and industrialists. This, non-profit health insurance agency has been a management plan that actually wages what should be a democratically-run organization.

Other gains are dental coverage, fully paid by the employer, at the rate of 56.8 cents a month; a grievance procedure extending 18 days from 15; a funeral leave clause, and increased retirement payments. These will go up by 50¢ a week on April 1, 1970, and another 50¢ on April 1, 1971.
Federal Reserve bank non-supervisory employees have been granted the right to unionize. A policy ruling by the Federal Reserve Board to this effect followed a plea to U.S. Secretary of Labor George P. Schultz by OPEIU President Howard Coughlin, who pointed out that these bank employees, who are not covered by the Federal Reserve System Labor Relations Board, are not covered by the Federal Reserve System Labor Relations Board. The ruling was prompted by the OPEIU campaign to unionize 500 Reserve Bank employees in Philadelphia, when it was found that they were not covered by any of the prevailing labor laws. The recent action by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System of a Policy on Unionization and Collective Bargaining for the Federal Reserve Banks, appears to afford such employees of such banks organizational, representation, and negotiation rights comparable to those provided employees in the Federal Service under Executive Order 10988.

"The Secretary appreciates your interest and concern in this matter and the expression of your views therein," Coughlin's letter was prompted by an OPEIU campaign to unionize 500 Reserve Bank employees in Philadelphia, when it was found that they were not covered by any of the prevailing labor laws.

"Now that the F. R. System has removed the reluctance to unionize among its non-supervisory employees," Coughlin commented, "the present trend toward unionism among employees of banks which are members of the Federal Reserve System will undoubtedly be stimulated."

Under the new Reserve Bank policy, recognition cannot be granted to any union which assigns the right to strike or which fails to agree to repudiate any organization employing coercive tactics. The banks are obligated to negotiate with qualified organizations in the broad areas of "personnel policies and practices, and matters affecting general working conditions."

Negotiations, however, are not to concern "such areas of discretion and policy as the purposes and functions of the bank, wages and hours, the bank's budget, the retirement system or life, health or accident insurance, its organization and assignment of people, or the logistics of performing the work."

Since the F. R. System does not have access to either the Federal Executive Order procedure for government workers or the NRLB, its employee relations policy calls for use of American Arbitration Association machinery and a Federal Reserve System Labor Relations Panel.

13 1/2% increase won at Curtiss-Wright

Across-the-board wage gains totaling 13 1/2% plus incentive adjustments were gained for 65 office workers by Local 219, Buffalo, N. Y., in a three-year contract renewal with Curtiss-Wright Corp.

The first 1 3/4% raise is retroactive to November 4, 1969, with an additional 3% effective November 3, 1969, and another 3% on November 2, 1970.

In addition to this pay increase, the collective bargaining agreement will also cover raises totaling $292 a month, according to the union.

Major medical coverage was increased from a maximum of $5,000 per illness for a two-year period to $15,000 for three years. Maternity and other benefits were improved.

Pension benefits were raised from $4.25 to $5.25 a month for workers retiring after November 4, 1960, with the rate going to $5.75 on December 1, 1961, and $6.25 by the end of 1969. Full pensions will be won for those retiring at 62 after 25 more years of service.

2 at OEO seminar

Mary C. Fortier, of Local 570 in Waterville, Maine, and Judith Bernstein, of Local 260 in Boston, were among students attending a two-week seminar held in Northampton, Mass., as part of the OEO Trade Union Leadership Training Program for New England. The course was held under the supervision of the University of Massachusetts Labor Relations Center.

Prices up again

The U.S. price index jumped a whole percentage point in March to reach 125.6. The Canadian index reached 124.6 in April, compared to 123.2 in March and 119.3 in April, 1969.