Blue Cross unit of 750 organized in Milwaukee

An especially hard-fought campaign ended in success when Local 9 was chosen as bargaining agent for 750 Blue Cross office employees in Milwaukee, Wis., in a major National Labor Relations Board election. Two days of balloting resulted in 328 votes for the union to 308 against. Thirteen votes were challenged.

The health insurance agency administers Medicare and Medicaid for the federal government as well as medical-surgical plans included in union contracts.

The Milwaukee office is the fifth to be organized by the OPEIU which already represents Blue Cross office employees in western New York (Buffalo area), Newark, N.J., San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Montreal, Canada.

The election victory climax a six-month campaign led by International Representative George V. Porcaro, who worked in close liaison with Local 9 Business Representative Edward J. Kubiicki, the Milwaukee Central Labor Council and the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor. International Representative Bill Adams assisted in the early and later stages.

Milwaukee Council officers held a meeting with Blue Cross management during the drive to inform them that the OPEIU had their full support and that any unfair labor practices would not be tolerated by the city’s unions.

The Milwaukee Labor Press, official publication of the Labor Council, gave the drive wide-spread publicity. It ran a pre-election editorial strongly urging the Blue Cross employees to vote for collective bargaining under the OPEIU banner.

The organizing techniques ap- plied by the Porcaro-Kubiicki team included the formation of energetic in-office committees; a weekly newsletter to the em- ployees; numerous small group meetings, and a “Leaflet-of-the-Month” bringing messages from Blue Cross employees in the Buffalo and Newark units urging votes for unionism.

Porcaro said that a particularly effective aid was a telephone brigade of seven in-office committee members who tirelessly made hundreds of calls to fellow-employees at their homes.

He added that a major campaig problem was the huge turnover among Milwaukee Blue Cross employees, reflecting unsatisfactory wages and working conditions.

In another success, Bill Adams reports that a unit of 23 office employees of DALU (Directly Affiliated Local Unions) in South Bend and other offices in Indiana have voted in an election for OPEIU affiliation. These are unions affiliated with the APL-CIO, which conducted the election.

Regional Director John B. Kliewick who headed a campaign among office employees of the law firm of Bronstad, Williams & Zellman, in San Diego, re- ports that Local 139 was chosen as bargaining agent in an elec- tion conducted by the California State Conciliation Board. The vote was 7 to 3.

From Vancouver, B.C., Business Manager Bill Swanson re- ports that Local 15 has been certified as bargaining agent for the office employees at Standard Brinks, Inc.
Unions must face up to threat of great global firms: Coughlin

Millions of employed and unemployed workers who feel threatened by giant multinational firms may justifiably turn to more radical trade unions unless the unions find satisfactory solutions.

This was the warning sounded by OPEIU President Howard Coughlin in a speech to the 16th World Congress of the International Federation of Clerical, Clerical & Technical Employees in Dublin, Ireland.

The federation, known as FIEI, is the second largest international labor organization in the Free World with a membership of 6 million white-collar employees. The OPEIU is an affiliate and Coughlin was named to the executive board.

Coughlin pointed out that the multinational corporate giants are revolutionizing the world economy, that national governments have imposed new, if any, legal restrictions on their activities, and that no country to date has completely analyzed the economic or social impact. He added:

"The name of the multinational corporate game is profits and more profits—without regard to national economies or, in many instances, the social welfare of human beings."

He said that unemployment already is being felt in the United States because multinational firms, taking advantage of cheap labor, at the same time are impounding the economies of both low-wage and high-wage nations. They do this by producing in low-wage nations and selling their products at the highest prices in countries with the highest living standards, he said.

As a result, Coughlin warned, unorganized white-collar employees will hear the brunt of the socialills these giants create, particularly because the power of trade unions to deal with them effectively has diminished in the last two decades as multinational firms have spread around the globe.

In conclusion, to Coughlin, the OPEIU delegation comprised Secretary-Treasurer J. Howard Hicks and Vice-President Ron Brous who was selected to represent the Canadian membership.

Women who work are victimized on both sides of the Atlantic

In the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Labor has found a "mounting number" of violations of laws which require equal pay and bar age discrimination in industry.

To meet the problem, U.S. Wage-Hour Administrator Robert D. Moran held a series of meetings for regional directors charged with enforcing fair labor standards throughout the nation.

Moran told them that most of those reporting violations of the Equal Pay Act are women and that many identify themselves as heads of families. Similarly, many women complain of age discrimination are breadwinners "and the loss or denial of employment opportunity results in great family hardship."

He added:

"There are many reported instances of older people in their 50's and 60's losing their jobs within a year or two of retirement eligibility for company-owned or financed pension plans. Some complain that their jobs are later filled by younger people at lower wage rates."

In Europe

Men still earn more than women in the European Economic Community despite the "equal pay for equal work" provision in the Common Market treaty, according to the EEC Commission.

At the end of 1968, it reports that Belgium and Luxembourg had made some progress toward equality of wages by law. However, the authorities were "not trying hard enough to secure equality in practice."

Some improvements in jobs covered by collective agreements were noted, although the Commission said large wage gaps between men and women still remained. Wage gaps were attributed to the lack of collective agreements in marginal industries and to direct discrimination by sex, mainly in job classifications.

The Commission urged both labor and management to keep the "equal pay for equal work" goal in mind during collective bargaining negotiations. According to a 1966 wage survey, differences in men's and women's average hourly earnings appeared to be lowest in Germany, France and Italy (although still considerable) and highest in the Netherlands. Belgium occupied an intermediate position.

The pension that vanished

Union organizers frequently run into people who delude themselves that their employer is giving them everything that a union could gain through collective bargaining.

U.S. government studies prove conclusively that this is a false notion. But even more eloquent than statistics are such real-life experiences as this:

A Philadelphia—-we withhold his name—-worked 37 years for the Hone & Hardin Tipping Company but appeal unionism because he felt the company didn't like unions. Non-union to the end, he retired on a $59 a month pension under the company plan.

After he retired, the company became unionized. Ironically, his wife will retire in April with a far bigger union-negotiated pension. Meanwhile, her husband has been notified that his company pension will stop. The wife's pension is fully protected by the union contract. But lacking union protection, there's nothing he can do about his own low pension.

This case typifies the way in which some corporations reward "employee loyalty." Company pension plans are unilateral grants—and may be unilaterally taken away.

A woman alone needs a union

Facing the future alone is just one of the handicaps a widow faces. If she has children, she may have to assume the dual role of father and mother. And there is a good chance the widow will choose not to remarry, the Institute of Life Insurances reports.

Latest insurance statistics on widows alone show that only:

• 3 of every 10 between 21 and 35 remarry.
• 2 of every 10 between 26 and 30 remarry.
• 2 of every 15 between 31 and 35 remarry.
• 1 of every 15 between 36 and 40 remarry.

A recent report by the Life Insurance Association Management Association reveals there are 725,000 women between widows in one recent year, including 318,000 whose husbands died before they reached 65. More than 20% of American households were headed by widows in that year.

Most widows today work in offices so it is obvious that since the majority of widows do not remarry, one of their best protections for the future is to work for a unionized firm. In non-union offices, they rarely enjoy the higher pay, the many economic advantages and other job protections a union contract offers.

Insurance statistics are another reason why women should belong to the OPEIU. Every married woman, especially, needs this protection for herself and her children in the unhappy event their male breadwinner is lost.

The U.S. Price Index

Dec. 31, 1970

Canadian Price Index

Dec. 31, 1970

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Erie Educational Conference: Delegates took time out from session at Pick-Carter Hotel to join volunteers from Cleveland leaders 17, 49 and 425 to handbill bank employees in area.
What does make possible

We have often said that the only spokesman for wage earners in the United States is the AFL-CIO. Over the years, the organized labor movement has led the fight for workers' Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, Sickness and Disability Law, and numerous other measures designed to help working men and women.

In the recent political campaign, the AFL-CIO waged a nationwide fight against those who would turn back the clock of history. In most instances, the AFL-CIO was successful in defeating the reactionary forces.

The organized labor movement did an excellent job in educating voters as to the economic ills which beset our country. AFL-CIO President George Meany, in his speech before the AFL-CIO's annual convention and again in television appearances and through the newspapers of increasing unemployment and the continuing recession caused by the Administration's tight money policies.

Despite the fact that most polls indicated the nation was moving sharply to the right, election results indicated that such was not the case. The organized labor movement is to be congratulated on its constant vigilance and the continuing efforts to improve the lot of American workers, whether organized or unorganized.

The AFL-CIO is a composite of approximately 50,000 local unions throughout the United States. It cannot exist without the continuing support of the local unions through their unrelenting efforts. In effect, therefore, when we as union members pay our monthly dues, we are not only defraying the cost of our collective bargaining efforts but also investing in an intangible force, for that potent national force will continue to fight in Washington and in various state legislatures against those who would, through legislation, nullify our collective bargaining gains.

Local unions which make up the labor movement directly represent their members in negotiations with the employers. Gains obtained by the average local union in the past twenty years have been monumental.

Increased salaries, pensions, health and welfare plans, improved vacations, profit sharing plans and bonuses, are now the order of the day. Just a few short years ago some of these were not legal subjects for collective bargaining.

Unfortunately, however, the average union member does not fully comprehend the job accomplished by him and his fellow workers by his collective bargaining representative. Due to numerous gains, in some instances a doubling of wages in the past five to seven years, the average union member is liable to think in terms of an increase in dollars. Without question he will pay for the increased cost of clothing, medical care and food, but he will seriously question and, in too many instances, vote against justifiable increases in monthly dues.

The American worker must slowly but surely become more sophisticated in respect to the need for financially sound local unions. Unless the trade union movement continues to be represented by dedicated leaders who have the necessary legal and statistical services always available, it will not be able to cope with the millions of dollars being spent by the forces of reaction who are now seeking to establish right-to-work laws.

It is vitally important that leaders of local unions do everything possible to educate their membership to the need for a sound financial structure to prevent free collective bargaining and continue the military necessary for continued improvements in the economic conditions of working men and women.

Union gains up in 1970

Major collective bargaining settlements concluded during the first nine months of 1970 covered 2.6 million workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. They provided:

1. A mean wage and benefit package adjustment of 10% a year, assuming changes went into effect at equal intervals during the three-year period (compared with 8.0% for the fall 1969 year).

2. When wage rates are considered separately from benefits, the average annual adjustment amounted to 9.6% of straight-time average hourly earnings, up from 7.8% advance for the fall 1969 year.

3. The average first-year wage and fringe benefit change amounted to 14.7% compared with 10.9% for the fall 1969 year.
New utility local off to fast start

An initial 15-month contract in addition to greatly improved fringe benefits, has been ratified by OPEIU's new 110-member unit of office and technical employees at Savannah Electric Power Company, in Savannah, Ga. The unit was charted as Local 455 after members of the employees' independent organization voted to affiliate in an NLRB election held in June. Four hours' call-in pay, an eight-hour day and time-and-a-half for all work over eight hours in one day or four hours per week are features of the providing wage gains of 15.5%, in addition to greatly improved fringe benefits, has been ratified by OPEIU's new 110-member unit of office and technical employ-

Package valued at $1,500 negotiated by Local 352

Improving previous standards by 25%, a three-year package of wage gains and fringe benefits valued at approximately $1,500 per member was negotiated by Local 352 for office employees of Chicago Pneumatic Tool Company, in Franklin, Pa. It took effect Nov. 1.

An initial cost-of-living clause applies in the final two years. The contract provides a first-year wage boost of 9%, plus indexing adjustments in all five grades, with across-the-board raises of 4% in each of the following two years. A 1½ hour shift differential was also established.

The addition of a paid holiday brings the total to 11. A new vacation schedule provides 12 days after seven years; 15 after 10, and 20 after 15. Substantial improvements were also made in seniority and wage progression, administration, extended medical coverage and group insurance, and more generous retirement benefits.

The union negotiating team was headed by Local 352 President Bob Hufnagel and Chief steward Dick Aylesworth. It included Mary Delong, George Eitel, Joe Hrusina and George Smith. They were assisted by International Representative John W. Richards.

Non-member sign-up campaign helps Local 27 win $1 ¼ million

A 2½% increase in wages alone (averaging about $2,000 per individual) was won in a three-year contract signed by Local 27 in Galveston, Texas, for its 600-member unit of office employees at American National Insurance Company. Business Manager Lucile Davenport estimates the value of the entire package at $11¼ million.

Before contract negotiations started, shop stewards and members of the OPEIU negotiating committee staged an intensive drive to sign up non-members. More than 100 responded from different departments, indicating to management that the bargaining unit was overwhelmingly backed by the employees in this "right-to-work" state.

"As a result, we were able to win the best contract ever negotiated with the company," comments International Representative Jack Langford who assisted in the negotiations with Vice-President and Regional Di-

Signing new National American Insurance Company contract are, from left, Local 27 Business Manager Lucile Davenport, President Joyce Douglas, Fred Rickemann, Jr., and Ogle Eichten. Standing are inter-
national Representative Jack Langford, Jeanne Lydon, Lou Sterling and Mary Lou Borthner.

An addition to paid holidays in the total of 10, and more liberal vacation schedules for up to 25 working days per year, depending upon length of service. Higher merit raises and improved wage increases were gained also.

The total cost feature is a long-term disability plan — costs entirely borne by the employer which, in the event of sickness or disability, provides in-
to come to age 65.

If you move, keep your old and new addresses, including zip code to:
J. Howard Holsa, Sec-Treas.
1612-440 St., N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005

2d Canadian paper pact brings $2,000 to 500

The Canadian International Paper Company and the New Bruns-
wick International Paper Company have signed a three-year contract covering some 500 office and clerical employees at their mills in three Eastern Canadian prov-

300 in Wisconsin Rapids achieve 64-cent advance

Valued at $1,330 per member, a two-year package of wage gains and fringe benefits was wrapped up by Local 354 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., for 301 office employees of Consolidated Paper, Inc., maker of enameled paper and laminated plastics. The new starting minimum scale is $102 per week in the

Plymouth, N.C., local wins increases, major medical

Wage gains ranging from about $1,165 to $1,415 per member, plus many fringe benefit improvements, were won in a three-year agreement negotiated by Local 354 in Plymouth, N.C., for the office employees of Weyerhaeuser Company. The Plymouth plant specializes in paper and does industrial printing.

The pact calls for across-the-board wage boosts of 25¢ an hour in the first year, and 4½¢ raises in each of the following two years. Improvements were made in maternity leave, sick pay, and disability benefits.

The company agreed to increase health-welfare payments for employees so as to provide $10,000 major medical insurance for employees and depend-

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