Retroactivity: Still questions

Congress has ordered retroactive payment of virtually all pay and benefit increases that were denied workers during the 90-day wage freeze. The order became law when President Nixon affixed his signature.

The retroactivity applies to contracts that were negotiated prior to the Aug. 15 freeze and that provided for deferred increases to take effect during the freeze period.

There remains a gray area, left to Pay Board interpretation. Not specifically covered by the mandatory retroactivity are contracts negotiated during or after the 90-day freeze period that provide for increases starting before Nov. 15. It is up to the Pay Board to set policy for such agreements.

OPEIU gains four units in year-end organizing

As a result of National Labor Relations Board elections, the OPEIU won four bargaining units among office employees adding more than 225 members to its ranks. The new units include a taxicab company, a trucking concern, a records business and a manufacturing company.

The largest unit consists of some 100 office employees at Lapp Insulator Co., a division of Interface Corp., in Leroy, N.Y., on the outskirts of Buffalo. Local 212's Business Manager Emil Steck initiated this campaign, which reversed a defeat 10 years ago.

Executive Board concludes
Phase II improves prospects for organizing and bargaining

After a full study and discussion of all aspects and ramifications of Phase II the OPEIU Executive Board at its semiannual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., concluded that union members should be advised that:

1. Prospects of gaining substantial wage boosts in new contracts are much brighter than generally believed, and
2. Opportunities for new organizing efforts during Phase II are enhanced, rather than retarded.

President Howard Coughlin stressed that existing merit increases, automatic progression, longevity and promotional increases—and even most fringe benefit costs—are excluded from the 5.5% ceiling. Besides, the Pay Board has given assurance that it will look objectively at contracts where raises are "in excess of even 8%," he noted.

The board concurred that the Pay Board "doesn't put us in a straitjacket, and, therefore, money for substantial wage boosts is legally available for union members if we negotiate skillfully and in the right way."

Urging major efforts at new organizing, Coughlin referred to U.S. Secretary of Labor Hodgin's statement on collective bargaining and said that during Phase II "the unorganized are at the complete mercy of employers who will insist that 5.5% is the limit, although actually there's much more money than that figure available for wage boosts."

The board unanimously agreed that "only through OPEIU representation can unorganized office employees obtain what's due them during Phase II," and emphasized that "all our locals should now launch determined new organizing campaigns in their areas to take advantage of the favorable present climate."

International Representative John F. Fitzmccarthur assisted Local 212 in the final stages of the effort.

In Los Angeles, Local 140 scored a solid victory among an 80-member unit at MCA Records, Inc., in Universal City, Calif. Around the same time, San Francisco Local 3 was chosen as bargaining agent for the office employees at the Veterans Yellow Cab Company in Hayward, Calif.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Local 31 was chosen to represent office employees at Ashworth Transfer, a trucking concern, by a hefty 4-to-1 margin.

OPEIU delegates to the recent AFL-CIO convention, held in Bal Harbour, Fla. In foreground is Mrs. J. Oscar Bloodworth, a visitor. Clockwise around table are Sec.-Treas. J. Howard Hicks, Vice President John F. Cahill and new Bloodworth, President Howard Coughlin and Vice President Edward J. Springman. The convention set the course for U.S. labor.

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Kaiser Hospitals yield hourly gains of 26 cents

Across-the-board wage boosts of 21¢ an hour, plus an additional 5¢ in fringe benefits, were agreed upon in a reopening of Local 17’s contract with the Kaiser Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio, Vice President John Kin- nick reports. The agreement also covers employees at Kaiser Community Health Foundation, the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and Ohio Perma- nent Services, Inc.

The wage gain became effective on January 1 and are subject to approval of the Pay Board. The employer agreed to provide its Drug Plan #1 on a two-party basis to eligible em- ployees in accordance with the existing collective agreement.

Dissolving developments in bank and Blue Cross organizing, the board reiterated that these fields "are prime organizing targets, and OPEIU Locals should not relax in any of these campaigns as the needs of those em- ployees are always greater than ever before."

The board studied special reports on the progress of current Blue Cross campaigns in Oak- land, San Francisco, New York City, Columbus and Detroit, among others. It expressed its appreciation to AFL-CIO Or- ganization Director Bill Kircher for "the important personal help to us in giving the current in- creased activities there.

OPEIU delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention in Bal Harbour, Fla. (Continued on page 4)

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Bank employees: Fear is unwarranted

The story on page three about the NLRB decision on the Ross Valley Savings & Loan Assn. proves that bank employees are fully protected by law when they try to unionize. It should put any lingering doubts to rest. Employees are now being given the opportunity to seek improvements in working conditions in the banking industry through collective bargaining.

We have found repeatedly that bank employees are among the nation's lowest-paid office workers simply because they aren't unionized. This is particularly true of those employed in savings and loan associations in smaller cities and suburban communities.

Fear is in any stumbling block when it comes to unionizing, and fear is a real one in this field. As a result, bank employees condemn themselves and their union to unwarranted attacks. As a result, bank employees condemn themselves and their union to unwarranted attacks.

Under the OPEIU banner, bank employees (who total about one million in the U.S. and Canada) could command unionized salaries and a better life, commensurate with their heavy responsibilities, in other countries.

Women today comprise about 60% of bank staffs. They range from girls in their teens to married women who have their great stumbling block when they seek unionization? Their lack of knowledge about how to unionize.

Fears multiply like rabbits. These fears are real and unavoidable. As a result, bank employees condemn themselves to a kind of bondage reflected in low pay and unhappy working conditions. They also lack adequate health insurance. If they unionized, they could be their own best friends.

If the public were to get an idea of the right, Lloyd Harrison and Eleanor Vincent.

The celebration coincided with the retirement of a New Brunswick-Central Canadian Pences, of incumbent Local 114 President Richard Taylor, who was given a gift of a canary "Bob Rae" in appreciation of his hard work in his years as the Local over the past several years. Stella Barrie presented a bouquet of roses to Mrs. Taylor.

False figures from the BLS

Some months ago the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found itself in the Nixon doghouse because it didn't interpret unemployment figures for the press to match the rosy economic forecasts of administration officials. A BLS shakedown followed, widening an Administration credibility gap.

As an example, the revamped BLS has just issued a news release stating flatly: "Office-worker compensation came to $5.79 an hour in 1970, exceeding the $5.61 (or 49 1/2%) the level of $3.88 for nonoffice employees."

When The Wall Street Journal frontpaged this BLS myth, the OPEIU promptly took issue with the Department of Labor. We pointed out that this inflated level could be arrived at only if salaries of company presidents, highly-paid executives and the like were lumped into the white-collar survey with the pay of rank-and-file office employees who comprise the overwhelming majority of the white-collar labor force.

The Department admitted we were right but explained that newspapers don't always "print news releases in full." But it evaded our question that if the facts were to get an accurate picture, future office wage surveys should exclude executive categories and include only rank-and-file office employees. Now the myth is repeated.

The fact is that the production worker who earns $3.88 an hour in 1970, or $15.20 a week, is far more highly paid than the rank-and-file office employee. Substituting mythology for reality may lend itself to public opinion, but it could boomerang.

When a junior executive was promoted to a secretarial position over the head of a senior employee with the required qualifications by the East Hartford (Conn.) Board of Educa-

Local 397 in Regina, Saskatchewan has represented employees of the provincial government's Investment Organization for a quarter of a century, and the members marked the anniversary with a dinner assembly. Above, at right, President Howard Coulson, guest of honor, addresses the guests. Above, a hilarious highlight was a song recited by a chorus of members in BVNs. Photo at right, Local 397 First Vice President Alice M. Parent with Coulson beside the birthday cake; to right are Mrs. Ripplinger, president of the local, and Bill Turner, chairman of the Celebrate Committe which was largely responsible for the success of the affair.

Board backs Local 435 on promotion

When a junior employee was promoted to a secretarial position over the head of a senior employee with the required qualifications by the East Hartford (Conn.) Board of Education, its Board of Education.

The grievant was qualified in the required manual skills and also had seniority over all other applicants. While conceding her competence, the employer con-

However, the union pressed that the interview was not at best of a cursory nature and was written by the employer merely as a device to by-pass the grievant's seniority qualification.

The tri-party Arbitration Board agreed with Local 435, ruling that too much weight was given to the interview which was "not the overwhelming and controlling factor." They found that the Board of Education "misapplied, mistranscribed and vio-

International Representative Justin F. Manning and Local 435 Chief Steward Marilyn MacDonald prepared and presented the grievant's case.
Coughlin to co-chair AAA subcommittee

OPEIU President Howard Coughlin and C. Jay Parkington, chairman of the American Arbitration Association's executive committee and recently retired chairman of the board of Ancosanda Company, have been named co-chairmen of a new AAA subcommittee for planning and development.

They will be assisted by 12 members of AAA's board of directors and all 25 chairmen of regional advisory councils in advising the national subcommittee on growth plans. The committee will work with AAA's public relations department and will be concerned with matters relating to funding, membership and spreading the use of the arbitration process. The committee will be expected to help guide the staff in long-range planning.

Bank unions overseas show what can be done

Although bank employees in North America are slow to unionize, this isn't true of their colleagues in other countries. They are organizing across Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and Latin America. Bank employees overseas are much higher—lower than wages of manual workers, and bank employees generally receive benefits unheard of in North American banks as a result of collective bargaining.

In Nigeria, West Africa, unionized bank employees have just succeeded in setting up a joint negotiating council with the bank's Anglo-American systems. The council's president is a delegate from the Nigerian Bank Employees Union and its vice president is a trade union official.

The council bargains collectively on all wage disputes, working hours, vacations, and fringe benefits. Since they unorganized bank employees—like their Swiss colleagues—enjoy 13-months' salary per year, they have also increased vacations by 20% and, besides, won an annual vacation for the unorganized.

Their welfare program, financed by the employers, includes dental, optical and hospital treatment as well as surgical operations and prescription drugs.

The council reviews all disputes in light of reductions. Under their union contract, the bank employees are entitled to two weeks' pay for each year of service.

The Nigerian bank unionists number 6,000 and negotiate with such multinational giants as the Bank of America, Barclays, the Bank of India, and the International Bank of West Africa among others.

Non-union North American bank employees may also receive collective bargaining if they lack collective bargaining. Missing the boat by not getting in line with their colleagues overseas and unionizing for their mutual benefit.

new guidelines are issued for two job categories

Wage-Hour Administrator H. E. Menasco says new guidelines have been approved to aid in determining the exemption of paramedical and data processing employees from the hours and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Announcing the revisions, Menasco comments:

The guidelines will be particularly helpful in determining the type of work performed by employees who are considered exempt, while employee representatives and management will also benefit by clarifying and simplifying the process of determining which jobs are considered exempt.

For example, the guidelines provide that employees who work in a capacity that is primarily professional or administrative are not exempt.

Local 426 helps two students

$200 scholarships were awarded recently by Local 426, Bristol (Tenn.), to graduating Woodrow Wilson High School in Levittown, Pa. Sec.-Treas. Joyce M. Long says that hearing that she is able to provide scholarships is the highlight of each school year.

The award-winning students are William L. Long, of Levittown, and Audrey Shaw, of Bristol, now taking a liberal arts course at Palm Beach Community College, Fla.

NLRB orders bank in California to reinstate and pay teller it fired

Sharon Louise Pincus, a teller discharged by the Ross Valley Savings & Loan Assn. in San Anselmo, Calif., had been reinstated when she acted as spokesman for bank co-workers in seeking to unionize the bank. She was ordered restored to her job with all lost pay, plus interest, by a National Labor Relations Board panel which upheld a San Francisco trial examiner's ruling.

Described as the bank's "best teller" by a superior, Mrs. Pincus was reinstated in 1969. After three months, she got an "automated" raise. In April, 1970, she was asked by another.

Her supervisor recommended that the bank turned it down because of the previous year's raise.

At the same time, Trial Examiner Herman Marx noted, Mrs. Pincus was told that under the collective bargaining agreement the bank would include employees such as tellers in the bargaining unit. Although bank employees are covered by the Wage-Hour Act, they are also covered by the collective bargaining agreement that Mrs. Pincus had signed with the union.

The council's president was also charged during the investigation, and as a result of that charge, he was suspended.

The trial examiner concluded that the bank was primarily concerned with Mrs. Pincus' influence on other employees, although proof was lacking that they had authorized her to be their spokesman in seeking a wage boost.

He ruled:

"A conversation involving 'union activities' among employees is 'concerted activity' protected by Section 7 of the (Taft) Act, if it appears that the speaker's object is to induce 'group action' by employees for their mutual benefit."

"Fairly interpreted, (the teller's) proposal to other employees that they seek wage increases was a concerted activity aimed at securing the strength of numbers for the 'mutual aid' and benefits of those in the group. Thus, irrespective of the inadmissibility of her listeners, her effort to secure their 'mutual benefit' was protected by Section 7 from restraint at the hands of her employer."

Marx proceeded to direct the savings and loan association to reinstate Mrs. Pincus with full compensation for lost wages.

If you move, send your old and new address, including zip code to:

J. Howard Hicks, Sec-Treas.
1012-14th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

United Way signs memo defining role for labor

The United Way of America and AFL-CIO signed an important Harbours, Fla., defining organized nationwide community service for formal collective bargaining on wages and working conditions for AFL-CIO community affairs representatives assigned to United Way, and provides for AFL-CIO representation among UUA officers as well as two seats on UUA's executive committee.

It calls for a Director of the UUA Labor Participation Department to be nominated by the AFL-CIO and to represent AFL-CIO community affairs representatives—four to be assigned to regional UUA offices with more to be appointed as additional officers.

The parties also agreed to work together to develop and train AFL-CIO community affair representatives assigned to full-time in regional, state and local United Way organizations and to orient all UUA staff members in labor policies and programs.

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From the desk of the President

Canadian topics: surcharge strikebreakers

The November issue of White Collar featured a letter from your President to the President of the United States expressing our concern with the effects of the 10% surcharge on Canadian imports. We strongly urged the immediate repeal of this surcharge against Canadian imports. We stated that this penalty was unfair to Canadian workers and would serve to undermine the excellent relationship which our two countries previously enjoyed.

The Executive Board of the Office & Professional Employees International Union, at its recent meeting, endorsed the action of your President and forwarded a similar communication to the President of the United States.

Canadian Labour Congress Secretary-Treasurer William Dodge, noting the reproduction of our letter to President Nixon in the newspaper, sent us a letter of commendation. Brother Dodge called our attention to the address of the fraternal delegate from the CLC to the recent AFL-CIO Convention. In his address, Brother Dodge pointed to the full significance (of U.S. economic policy) it needs to be understood that Canada, more than any other industrial nation in the world, is dependent on exports. Without export revenue, Canada would "die," and some 65 per cent of these exports come here to the United States. You are our best customer. May I urge that the AFL-CIO take this into account when they talk to the American Congress to get more of what we need from Canada?

We are deeply concerned with the effects of the 10% surcharge in Canada. We strongly urge the U.S. government to make sure that the surcharge is removed.

Executive Board concludes

Continued from page 1)

Nixon veto—a blow to working mothers

The historic bill to establish a national system of child development programs and day care centers, vetoed by President Nixon, was one of the greatest accomplishments by Congress in this session. Led by the AFL-CIO and strongly supported by organized labor, religious, women's organizations, and other public interest groups, it would have authorized a multi-billion dollar federal program offering a full range of educational, health and nutritional services to children of working mothers. Nixon's veto is "indefensible" and a "crass political action," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Lane Kirkland said. "At the very time he is demanding that Congress pass a tax bill loaded with giveaways to the nation's giant corporate interests, he is denying federal aid to the children of working mothers and the poor."

The President reiterated his assertion that his welfare proposals would adequately take care of poverty-level mothers who need a place to park their children while they work. Kirkland scoffed that Nixon's veto "has made it clear that he is not really interested in the child; his chief concern is with a cheap, babysitting operation for the children of welfare mothers and the working poor."

Executive Board concludes

No effects are expected to be held on Thursday and Friday, but efforts will be made to accommodate Locals in a given Conference area where a majority favors different dates. Urged Locals to attempt to bring all independent unions in their areas into the OPEIU fold by convincing them of the many advantages of affiliation with this union.

U.S. Price Index

Canadian Price Index

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