Summer organizing adds 525 members to ranks of OPEIU

Despite the vacation lull, organizing has continued in high gear. The latest reports show 525 members added to OPEIU ranks in the U.S. and Canada, including employees of a bank in Fort Myers, Florida.

The largest accretion was in New York City where Sec. Treas. John Kelly announced that an independent union representing some 400 security employees in key hotels, and the Pratt Institute, and in Brooklyn, voted to affiliate with Local 153.

The independent union was organized in 1968. Its president, Anthony Tronolone, has now joined Local 153's Hotel Division as a business representative, working closely with Business Representatives Frank Jarvis and Mike Ponti in servicing this growing section of the union.

Local 153 also organized a 40-member unit of front office employees at the elite Plaza Hotel, at 59th St. and Central Park South. Management recognized the union following an independent card check. Ponti, who presided at the successful campaign, said that as a result new drives are now going on to organize front office staffs in other New York hotels.

Tacoma Local 23 Sec.-Treas. F. S. Korschens reports winning a National Labor Relations Board election among 21 employees at Forks State Bank, in Forks, Washington. It is the second bank to join Local 23 in less than six months, the first being the Community Bank of Renton, in Renton, Washington.

Vice President Romeo Corbell reports that Montreal Local 57 has been certified by the Quebec Labour Relations Board as bargaining agent for a 30-member office unit at Clark Steamship Company.

International Representative Wilfred L. Peel reports a success at a second office group at Silverwood Dairy in London, Ont. The vote in an Ontario

W. A. Lowe appointed secretary-treasurer

Canadian-born OPEIU Vice President William A. Lowe, 52, was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the late J. Howard Hicks as the International's Secretary-Treasurer at a special meeting of the Executive Board in Washington, D.C., and immediately took over the duties of the office.

Born in Port Moody, British Columbia, on March 13, 1921, he is the second official to fill the post since the OPEIU was chartered in 1945. He was educated at Port Moody High School, and later took courses in Electrical Engineering at the British Institute of Science & Technology, and the Administration at the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

He and his wife, Margaret Lona, have two children.

During World War II, Bill joined the Canadian armed forces in 1939 and served for six years until separated from the service in 1945. In that year he joined the B.C. Electric Company, now known as the B.C. Hydro & Power Company, and became a member of the B.C. Electric Employees Union, at that time an independent.

He was president of the independent union when it voted to affiliate with the OPEIU to become Local 378 in Vancouver, B.C. He was named an OPEIU International Representative in 1955, and was elected a Vice President in 1959.

Prior to his new appointment he was OPEIU Regional Director and Vice President for Re-

J. Howard Hicks

J. Howard Hicks, 61, OPEIU International Secretary-Treasurer, recently returned from Bogota, Colombia, where he had attended the Inter-American Regional Conference of the Federation of International Employees and Technicians (FIET). The federation, of which he was a vice president, represents white-collar employees in the Free World with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

He was stricken on July 21 as he waited in line at a ticket office in Miami airport to change planes, was rushed to local hospital but died shortly after arrival. The remains were later flown to Arlington, Va., where he resided.

Burial was in Fairfax County, Va. Funeral services were attended by President Howard Coughlin, members of the Executive Board, and hundreds of other labor officials from international unions with headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Originally a member of Portland Local 11 which he joined in 1937, Hicks was a pioneer in the white-collar union movement, and was President of the Western Council of Office Workers in 1941 when the American Federation of Labor convened in Seattle. With locals of other independent white-collar unions, they successfully lobbied adoption of a resolution ining AFL officers to establish an International Council, the first step toward forming an international union for office employees.

As a direct result of this action, AFL President William Green called a meeting in Chicago on July 28, 1942, with delegates from 50 independent white-collar unions attending.

Scores of other independent white-collar locals, which did not attend, promptly affiliated with the new International Council.

The delegates elected Hicks as first President of the International Council. He held this position until the OPEIU was chartered in January 1945, meanwhile serving as a full-time AFL staff representative assigned to promoting unionization of professional, office, clerical and technical employees throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Upon chartering of the OPEIU as an autonomous international union in 1945, he was elected its first Secretary-Treasurer—the position he filled until his death.

At the invitation of the Federal Republic of West Germany in 1956 he traveled widely in that country studying white-collar unionization and explaining to German union colleagues the structure and operation of white-collar unions in the U.S. and Canada.

In 1961 he represented the OPEIU at the FIET Berlin Congress and was elected a member of its Executive Committee. He was reelected at the 1964 Tel Aviv and the 1967 Washington FIET Congresses. At the 1970 Dublin Congress, he became a Vice President of FIET's International Regional Organization.

He frequently lectured on labor topics to university, college and other groups, and represented the OPEIU before congressional committees and other Federal agencies. He was a member of the administrative committee of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE), administrator-trustee of the OPEIU Welfare Plan, and secretary of the Retirement Committee of the OPEIU Pension Plan.

Born in Portland, Ore., Nov. 21, 1911, he graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He also did post-graduate work in law at the University of Oregon.

He is survived by his wife, Helen, at 2002 N. 21st St., Arlington, Va.; two daughters, Mrs. Dorothy Harding, of Bladensburg, and Mrs. Carol Lewis, of Lanham; four grandchildren and a brother, Kenneth, of San Diego, Cal.
J. Howard Hicks: In memoriam

With the deepest sorrow we record in this issue of White Collar, which he helped to found, the sudden death of our beloved International Secretary-Treasurer J. Howard Hicks. He was fatally stricken in Miami Fl., while returning to Washington, D.C. from the Interamerican Regional Conference of FIET in Bogota, Colombia.

Howard's smiling face and genial personality were known to thousands of white-collar workers attending conventions down through the years. He had filled for 28 years the post of Secretary-Treasurer of this International, since it was established as an autonomous union with an AFL charter in 1945. He was a dedicated, devoted International officer who always discharged his duties and responsibilities with gentle courtesy, guccipulous honesty and the highest personal integrity. Because of these sterling qualities of character and the high esteem in which he was held, it is noteworthy to recall that he was overwhelmingly reelected at the post at each OPEIU Convention.

As a pioneer in the white-collar union movement in the U.S. and Canada, he also had been recognized in labor circles overseas at FIET Congresses. He held important posts in the white-collar secretariat to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

At the 1920 Dublin Congress of FIET, he relinquished membership on the executive committee to become Vice President of his Interamerican Regional Organization, in which capacity he was attending the Bogota conference. He died in harness, so to speak, in the line of duty not only to this International Union but also to the international white-collar union movement.

In his passing, the OPEIU has lost a diligent and conscientious International officer, a respected, loyal and sincere friend in the cause of white-collar unionism. In their sad bereavement, his wife and family have the heartfelt sympathy of every OPEIU member throughout the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico.

Howard Hicks will be long remembered by all of us and his goods works will have a lasting beneficial effect on the union.

Unionism means rights

Most employees regard a union contract merely as a document setting forth wages, fringe benefits and working conditions. But it is far more than that, says a faculty member of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations of the University of Illinois.

Speaking in Chicago, Professor Stan Wier compared a union contract with the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. Illustrating his talk with a "flip chart," he likened the Constitution's Bill of Rights to a Union contract representation. He declared that employees have "no rights as citizens in the workplace" unless they have a union, and that "organization is the only way to carry these rights" into the plant or office.

Professor Wier compared the right of an employee to see his union steward to the right of a citizen to consult his lawyer, adding that the unorganized plant or office is similar "to a dictatorship where people have no guaranteed rights.

The labor relations expert explained organized labor "potentially the most potent organized force in the land," and urged union members "to insist on all the protections that the Constitution provides on the outside; and the labor movement's "past practices" concept in union-management relations to the "rights retained by the people" as contained in the Ninth Amendment to the Constitution.

We hope that OPEIU members will study Professor Wier's remarks and pass them on to others so as to inform union friends and acquaintances who fail to grasp the real meaning of unionism, and why it is important for them to organize for their own self-protection. They contain powerful and compelling arguments why everyone working for a living should belong to a union.

Cost of Living Council issues exemption ruling

The Cost of Living Council has issued a regulation officially exempting from pay controls employees earning $3.50 an hour or less, retroactive to May 1, 1973. The official regulation came four months after Congress enacted the Economic Stabilization Act, legislating that the low-wage "working poor" exemption be increased to the $3.50 figure from $2.75.

The regulation (Section 130.36 of the CLC regulations) exempts from controls employees in this category regardless of whether they are in the "self-administered" controls sector or the mandatory sector comprising the construction, health services, and food retailing and processing industries.

5.5% plan

There are indications that the Council would approve full 5.5% pay raises in addition to whatever raise brings the employee to $3.50 an hour only if that employee's original base pay raise was less than but not over $2.50.

For example, an employee whose base pay was $2.50 an hour could receive a pay raise immediately bringing him to $3.50 an hour, but he is not likely to be entitled to an additional 5.5% raise. But if the raise brings the employee to $3.50, the 5.5% plan may well be utilized under CLC regulations, for a 5.5% raise in addition to the $2.50 raise that would bring him to the cutoff level.

As to those employees receiving more than $3.50 with others earning less than $3.50, pre-notification and reporting forms must include separate descriptions of pay increases granted to those earning more than $3.50. Tripartite wage and salary committees in the food and health services industries will issue directives for reporting and evaluating pay adjustments for employees earning more than $3.50 who are in "mixed white-collar units" with low-wage workers.

The CLC regulation supercedes any decisions and orders issued by the Council which limited pay adjustments to less than $3.50 or on or after May 1, and it also supersedes applicable Pay Board regulations which related to low-wage employees.

Coughlin named to N.Y. panel

Governor Rockefeller has appointed OPEIU President Howard Coughlin to a 13-member screening panel to review the professional qualifications of candidates recommended to the Governor for appointment as judges to handle cases under N.Y. State's new narcotics law.

The Governor named Francis Bergan of Albany, a former assistant to the judge of the Court of Appeals, to chair the panel which is composed of eight lawyers and two non-lawyers. The two non-lawyers are Coughlin and Mrs. George Ames of Rye, N.Y., former president of the State League of Women Voters.

20% raise, dental plan are Vancouver score

A 20% across-the-board wage increase, doubletime for overtime after 35 hours, and a dental plan fully paid by the employer are among two-year contract negotiated by Vancouver Local 15 for its office unit at Pacific Terex, Business Manager Bill Swan reports.

Retroactive to May 1, the pact calls for three weeks vacation after two years, four after eight, five after five, six after 20, and eight after 30 years. It also stipulates severance pay up to 20 weeks, and an additional $30 per month for employees over 50.

W. A. Lowe appointed secretary-treasurer

(Continued from page 1)
Dues and members' expectations

A paradox most difficult to fathom is the contradictory way a union member feels about the responsibilities of his leaders as opposed to the need for adequately financing his organization by payment of dues.

Members demand and expect the processing of grievances through all steps of the grievance machinery to and including arbitration. Members demand and rightfully expect that the union will provide up-to-date research and statistics supporting the members proposals in collective bargaining. Members demand and expect that they will be represented by competent attorneys at the National Labor Relations Board and in arbitration proceedings. They demand a high degree of competence in arbitrators which generally means high fees. In the event a strike is necessitated, members expect that the union will not only finance a militant, efficient strike, but will provide adequate strike benefits for the duration.

On the other hand, these same members historically oppose justifiable increases in local union dues. Despite every example of increases in costs, the knowledge that union representatives and office staff now receive higher wages, and the additional examples of higher rates for meeting halls, research, legal fees and every other facet of union operations, the overwhelming majority of locals report great difficulty in attempting to raise dues. For some reason difficult to comprehend, members for the most part fail to understand that strong unions must also be financially sound.

Building trades example

Some of the strongest unions in the United States and Canada are found in the building trades. Building trades leadership are the exception to the rule. This membership knows that its unions must be financially strong. As a consequence, it is not reluctant to increase dues rates when such increases are made necessary by inflation of living costs.

The University of Michigan, in a study made several years ago, revealed that union families as a group have achieved higher levels of income than comparable non-union families. They have larger holdings in terms of liquid assets, are able to contract a higher amount of installment obligations and account for a higher proportion of home ownership. In effect, the University of Michigan has ascertained that workers who do not belong to a union are severely penalized in terms of their weekly paycheck. These workers pay no dues—and they pay dearly for that privilege.

The United States Department of Labor in 1966 reported that the non-union member received $500 more per year than the union worker counterpart. If, as that study indicated in the year 1966, union workers received $2,683 more than did the non-union worker, then certainly the disparity is greater today. The government also in that year found that health, welfare and pension benefits achieved by union workers far surpassed the fringe benefits received by non-union workers. As a result, union workers are envied by their non-union counterparts who would gladly change their wages and conditions of employment for the benefits contained in the average collective bargaining agreement.

Wagner Act precedent

Knowing all these things, why are most union members loath to increase dues and adequately support their organizations which have gained for them a standard of living higher than all other workers throughout the world? One answer may have originated in the depression years when, after the inception of the Wagner Act, dues were set at a dollar per month for the newly created unions. On the other hand, in this year of 1973, when unions have achieved record-breaking wage increases, excellent health and welfare plans, and substantial pensions, in addition to numerous other gains including job security, why don't the average union member feel that all this makes it possible for the union doesn't continue to be militant, formidable and financially sound?

If we are to become as strong as the building trades unions, we are going to have to change our thinking with respect to our own contributions to our unions. We must realize that an educational program designed to change the thinking of most members with respect to their responsibilities towards their unions is long overdue.

A union is only as strong as members permit it to be!
Bank wage data measures high cost of non-unison

Across-the-board wage gains totaling some $2,750 per individual employee would add an eleventh paid holiday, to be determined at each of the three companies. Life insurance coverage is increased to $7,000 (was $6,000) on Aug. 8, to $8,000 on April 24, 1974, and to $9,000 on the 1975 anniversary date. The pact provides paid sick leave for illnesses connected with pregnancy, maternity and paternity leave, with benefits now included under the medical and hospitalization plan. Under the old agreement, employees received a flat maternity benefit of $400.

Other medical improvements include a reduction in a yearly deductible under major medical to $50 (was $75) for single coverage, and to $150 (was $200) for family coverage. A company-paid optical care program for employees and their dependents will go into effect on April 24, 1975.

Under the old retirement plan, an employee received one point for each year of service with the company and one point for each year of his age. When an employee accumulated 70 points he could retire with full medical coverage for himself but not for his dependents. Under the new agreement, an employee who retires with 80 or more points will receive medical coverage for himself and his dependents.

The contract runs to April 24, 1976.

Pay parity for women achieved at B.C. mill

Equal pay for office women at MacMillan Bloedel pulp mill in Port Alberni, British Columbia, was gained in a two-year contract negotiated by Vancouver Local 15, according to Business Manager Bill Swanson. Over the term of the new agreement, the women employees gain a 21% increase, against 18% for the men, he reports. In the first year, they obtain a 12% across-the-board raise to bring them up to parity with men employees doing the same work, compared with 9% for men.

The OPEIU and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers had been negotiating jointly with the paper company since July 10.

Discharged tellers collect $500,000

Seven-year-old picket signs came down at the Chase Manhattan Bank in Tokyo, Japan, when Chase finally agreed to rehire all 10 of the clerks and tellers it fired late in 1966 because of union activities. It was the longest labor dispute against a foreign operation in the history of Japan.

The 10 unionized employees not only get $500,000 in back pay, plus interest, but won't have to report back for work until the fall. They won three months accumulated leave.

Phyllis Young, Local 15, named to B.C. cabinet

Phyllis F. Young, a member of the British Columbia Provincial Cabinet, was recently named Minister without Portfolio in charge of Consumer Affairs in the British Columbia Provincial Cabinet. A member of the New Democratic Party, she was elected to the Provincial Legislature in a party landslide which brought the NDP to power in British Columbia last year. She retains her OPEIU membership, and still continues active on Local 15's Political Education Committee.

Rita Lalik, also from Vancouver and a member of Toronto Local 343, has been appointed as her executive assistant.