Employees of school boards find a union home in Montreal local

A principal organizing target of Montreal's Local 57 in the last year has been secretaries and clericals employed by school boards—a field on which the OPEIU has scored a string of notable successes, reports Vice President Romeo Corbeil who is coordinating these campaigns in the eastern Canada region.

One key to success, Corbeil says, is that members already protected by OPEIU contracts attend organizing meetings along with union Business Representatives. Their first-hand testimony on the many benefits derived from collective bargaining convinces other school board employees to go union.

Illustrating the success of this approach, he listed the following school board units recently organized in swift campaigns by Local 57 Business Representatives Marc Boulard, Laurent Auxclair and Michel Rousseau, with the help of unionized school board members. The School Board of Naperville, 26 employees; School Board of Brassard, 14; School Board of Yamaska, 9; Taillon and St. Hubert School Board, 35, and the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board where Local 57 has applied for certification of two units comprising 90 employees. The Montreal Local now represents more secretaries and office employees of school boards than any other in the U.S. or Canada.

Meanwhile, Local 57 Business Representatives Gilles Beauregard and Jacques Labbeau have applied to the Quebec Labour Relations Board for certification for an office unit of 90 office employees at Vilchon Bakery in Montreal.

International Representative Brian Fahnihan reports that Local 15 has been certified as bargaining representative for an office unit of 50 employees at the Commonwealth Construction Co., Ltd., in Vancouver, B.C., a first in the construction industry. Other companies in the field are paying close attention to this arrival of unionism.

In Detroit, the OPEIU in an NLRB election won a unit of 10 salaried at the Detroit Furniture Distributing Company by a unanimous vote. The Teamsters were also on the ballot. Philadelphia Local 14 won a small unit in an NLRB election among office employees at Lipoff's Wholesale Meats, Inc., Business Representative John McCuskler reports.

Gone—20,000 brokerage jobs

During the last few years more than 20,000 brokerage employees have lost their jobs in Wall Street and the end is not in sight, a nationwide survey by the New York Times indicates.

It finds that a restructuring of stock exchanges could take a variety of forms, ranging from a simple electronic linkage, in which trades are carried on a universal tape showing one exchange what the others are doing, to the elimination of regional exchanges, and creation of a single huge exchange with regional satellites, all linked by computers.

Brokers responding to the survey said they believed the securities industry was "going through a massive and fundamental change."

"It may be a crude analogy," one brokerage official said, "but I see the securities industry structured in the future like the grocery industry—huge supermarkets and small convenience stores with nothing in between."

Another broker said he expected to see more than 50% of the Big Board's member firms either merge or go out of business. It was felt that the restructuring which the financial community is now undergoing will strengthen a few large firms, making them in effect price-setters for the entire industry and that smaller, more flexible firms would disappear.

Suffering most, some believe, would be medium-to-large firms, with high overhead and many branch offices, that had not been as efficient as some of their competitors.

Not one single brokerage house has ever been unionized, so Wall Street cannot blame its present plight on unions. The OPEIU has long contended that if brokerage houses had been unionized a long time ago, the securities industry today would be far more stable.

$1,365 advance in Twin Cities

Wage gains totaling $1,365 for each member over two years plus fringe benefits improvements were gained in a new contract negotiated by Twin Cities Local 12 for its office unit at the National Electrical Contractors Association of Minneapolis, a joint labor-management organization.

Business Manager H. R. Markussen reports that the pact calls for across-the-board wage boosts of $39.92 per month in each of the two years. In the final year, it sets a starting monthly minimum of $524 in the lowest office grade, rising to a $765 maximum, and in the top classification a $602 minimum, rising to a $908 maximum.

Other gains are a personal holiday, bringing the annual holiday total to 10; time off for doctor-dentist appointments in half-segments, mother and father-in-law added to the bereavement clause, and a new provision covering seniority in the event of a merger. The pact runs to July 31, 1975.

Washington office is moving January 1st

The OPEIU's Washington office, which houses Secretary-Treasurer William A. Lowe, and his staff will move from its present location to the new AFL-CIO building, 815 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, D.C. 20006.

The move is effective on January 1, 1974. The telephone number remains the same: (202) 393-4464.

THE OPEIU WAS THERE: The union's delegation to the AFL-CIO Biennial Convention in Miami Beach, Fla., is absorbed in the proceedings. The members are (clockwise) Vice Presidents Ed Springer and John Kelly, President Howard Coughlin, Sec.-Treas. William A. Lowe and Mrs. Lowe, and Vice President J. Oscar Bloodworth. The convention charted labor's course for the next two years.
Federationist article assesses professional surge into unions

The myth that professional people—the so-called snobs of the business world—never join unions is evaporating, Jack Goldoder, executive secretary of SPACE, asserts in the AFL-CIO magazine Federationist. SPACE is the AFL-CIO council of white-collar unions with which OPEIU is affiliated.

He says that a 1970 Dept. of Labor report found nearly three million of the five million organized white-collar workers were professional and technical people, adding that "the future life and growth of the labor movement lies with the unionization of professional, technical and white-collar salaried employees."

The same conditions that promised organization by blue-collar workers are now developing in the white-collar field as well, Golodner notes. Among conditions encouraging the growth of white-collar unions today he says, is the increasing loss of individuality of the typical white-collar employee.

"Being employed in large numbers by highly diversified institutions or corporations means that he is slowly but surely being removed from participation in the decision-making process," Golodner points out. "It means an individual voice—no matter how knowledgeable—no longer counts."

Another fact of contemporary life lending more white-collar professionals and clericals to join unions is the steady decline in the relative and real income among the unorganized, Golodner declares. The gap between top-ranking white-collar professionals, sales and technical people, and wages paid to the rank and file is growing ever narrower, he adds. And this gap in net income is further reduced by taxes.

"Even engineers and scientists—people heretofore indifferent to unions—are slowly becoming aware of the fact that the field is out to eat their lunch," Golodner observes, adding:

"Labor's lobby has served the organized blue-collar worker well. It is serving the white-collar employee equally as well, and will serve him even more as the current trend of white-collar employees into unions continues."

Union negotiators seem turning to uncapped escalator clauses

More and more union negotiators are finding that the answer to inflation, or at least a way to protect their members against rampaging prices, is to win more cost-of-living escalator clauses that provide automatic pay raises when the Consumer Price Index is raised.

The Executive Council's report to the recent AFL-CIO convention advocated the uncapped escalator approach and stressed its spread. "Most contracts negotiated in 1972 and the first half of 1973 had no maximum or cap on escalator raises when the Consumer Price Index is raised."

The typical cost-of-living formula calls for workers to receive raises based on the Consumer Price Index, with most contracts limiting the per capita costs that have no ceiling.

The typical cost-of-living formula calls for workers to receive raises based on the Consumer Price Index for each 0.4 percentage-point in the Consumer Price Index, which is compiled each month by the U.S. Department of Labor. About half of the escalator clauses provide for quarterly adjustments, most of the others call for annual changes.

Some union officials figure themounting use of escalators poses a dilemma for national administration wage controllers. "This could just turn out to be the end of controls," commented one AFL-CIO official. "The guys will just negotiate a smaller increase (to avoid attracting the wrath of Labor's Council's attention) and let the escalator clause do the job."

His implication was that the government would find it politically undesirable to cut wage boosts linked to its own data on consumer prices. There's no indication of any change in controls, however, and the council continues to permit cost of living increases to be calculated in a more liberal fashion than straight negotiated raises.

Because the unlimited escalators are yielding such fat raises, many employers now are willing to negotiate bigger fixed pay boosts in exchange for a lid on cost of living increases.

Bristol local is upheld on job bumping

Arbitrator John Perry Horlacher ruled that the School District of Bristol Township, in Bristol, Pa., violated its Local 426 contract when it denied Joseph Joy the right to bump into the Payroll Department after it abolished its IBM Department Store as a machine operator in the latter department.

Horlacher directed the board to permit Mrs. Long to bump into the job of assistant payroll supervisor, and "after 30 days in the job she was clearly demonstrated she lacked the necessary qualifications, she shall then be permitted to bump into a lower paying classification for which she is qualified."

Local 426 filed the grievance after the board subcontracted its data processing work to Tri-log Associates. When the IBM department was abolished, Mrs. Long sought to bump into the Payroll Department but her request was denied. She was subsequently offered a job with Tri-log, but was subsequently laid off.

In his decision, Horlacher said that "there is insufficient evidence on which to base a solid finding that Mrs. Long was qualified or wasn't qualified for the job she wanted to bump into. At the least, the School District owes Mrs. Long the opportunity to prove herself. This, it seems to me, points to the reasonable outcome of the case."
New Jersey local upheld in dispute with Blue Cross

Arbitrator David Kaplan has upheld Local 32's grievance that Hospital Services and Medical Surgical Plans of New Jersey (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) violated its contract by improperly excluding from the bargaining unit the job of computer systems testing coordinator.

Local 32 claimed that the company had acted unilaterally, violating the following contract clause: "Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to imply the right to assign . . . bargaining unit work to any management position. Future exclusions will be determined by management and the union."

The same provision contained, Kaplan said, "a long series of position titles which, by agreement, were excluded from the unit." The disputed job was not among those excluded. The union also claimed, he adds, that the employer violated a provision requiring all new jobs to be posted.

The employer contended that the work performed by the testing coordinator has always been carried out by non-bargaining employees such as assistant systems analysts, and also maintained that the testing coordinator had a one-to-one working relationship with employees in other excluded jobs as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Concluding that the union's grievance was justified, Kaplan says the employee holding the job of testing coordinator must become a member of the union as of the 60th day following the first hearing of the grievance June 25, 1973.

In light of an employer admission of failure to negotiate the exclusion of the job, Kaplan rules that the functions of the position cannot be reconsidered for exclusion from the unit for three years and two months—a time span equal to the period it took to process the grievance. The latter provisions, however, may be lifted if the incumbent becomes a supervisor or professional as defined by the Taft-Hartley Act.

Rights to work four days won for 680 in Galveston

Across-the-board wage gains totalling 15% over three years, the right of employees to compress their 371/2-hour work week into less than five days, plus improved sick leave and vacations were won in a new contract negotiated by Local 27 for its 680 members at American Life Insurance Company in Galveston, Texas.

Business Representative Lucile Davenport reports that the pact calls for a 7% wage increase in the first year and 4% in each of the following two years. It also provides an additional 4% in the first year for employees at the top of their classifications who no longer receive contractual longevity increases, as well as 4% on their anniversary dates.

Promotional raises, ranging from $20 to $32 per month under the old agreement, are increased by 5%. Other improvements include two weeks' vacation after one year and an additional day for each year after six years providing three vacation weeks after 10 years. Employees are now allowed to accumulate a maximum of 65 sick days leave, against 39 under the old pact.

The company week, unchanged at 371/2 hours, has been modified to allow employees to put in their hours in less than five days if they so desire. Any work over 371/2 hours will be paid at 1.5-times, and work in excess of 45 hours at double-time.

If an employee opts for the compressed work week, he will not be paid at a premium rate for work in excess of 71/2 hours each day. The company also allows employees to choose their own starting and quitting time each day.

The agreement runs to October 10, 1976.

Delegates who attended the recent joint Southeast and Southwest OPEIU Educational Conference at the Sheraton-Chateau Charles Hotel in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Local 87 was host.

$4,032, cost of living allowance gained for 600 at Freeway

Wage gains totaling $4,032, supplemented by a cost-of-living allowance, per individual over three years were gained by Portland's Local 11 for its 600 members at Consolidated Freeway's Corporation in Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Washington.

Sec.-Treas. Walter A. Engelbert reports that a new contract calls for a $35 an hour across-the-board wage boost in the first year and 30¢ in each of the following two years. In the final year, it sets a minimum weekly wage scale of $148.60 in the lowest office grade, rising to $202 maximum.

In the top office classification, the third-year minimum weekly rate will be $285.00, rising to $314.40 maximum. Engelbert points out that more than 90% of the employees in the bargaining unit are now paid at the maximum rates in their classification.

Like the Teamsters' master agreement, the Local 11 pact calls for cost-of-living adjustments on October 1, 1974, and on the same 1975 date of at least 8¢ per hour in each with an 11¢ cap.

Good Friday and a floating holiday, bringing the annual total of holidays to 12, are provided in the agreement, which also calls for three weeks of vacation after seven years and five weeks after 20 years.

Employer contributions to the pension plan are increased from $11 to $14 per week per employee in the first year, to $16.50 in the second, and to $18 in the third year.

The contract also calls for a company-paid prescription drug plan in the first year, a doubling of benefits under the optical plan, and up to $400 maternity coverage. In the third year, it provides $20,000 ADD and insurance, a maternity "corridor" deduction assuring that employees will not have to pay more than $200 for maternity coverage, plus other improvements in insurance benefits.

The contract runs to October 1, 1976.

Edward A. McLaughlin

The union regrets to announce the death of Edward A. McLaughlin, past President of Local 352 in Franklin, Pa., where he was employed as a photo technician in the Engineering Department of the Joy Manufacturing Company.

A dedicated OPEIU member, McLaughlin was elected a vice president of Local 352 in 1958-59 and later president, serving in the latter post for two consecutive terms. Under his direction, the local grew from 115 to 250 after a successful campaign to induce office employees at Chicago Pneumatic Equipment Company to join. Former Sec.-Treas. Ruth White and he made house-to-house calls on CPE employees in 1968 with the result that 75% voted to affiliate with Local 352.

McLaughlin was a delegate to the San Francisco and Miami Beach conventions, and represented the Franklin local at OPEIU Educational Conferences in the Erie region. At the time of the centennial celebrations in Franklin and Oil City, Pa., he was responsible for the OPEIU Boast participating in parades, doing all the carpentry work himself.

Among McLaughlin's last union acts was the presentation of a gift to a Local 352 associate—see photo below.

McLaughlin was active in church, civic and Boy Scout activities in Oil City, where he resided. He is survived by his wife, Betty; a daughter, Shirley; and a son, Bill, to whom we offer our sincerest sympathy.
Banking is the profession of one million individual workers in North America and more may be described as a labor intensive industry. In the past, those in banking could look forward to a stable career and to predictable promotion up the ladder.

Today, this is no longer true; advancement may be described as an automatic change in the picture. The discovery and development of the transistor makes possible the "impossible," the landing of men on the moon. This technology is now being applied to the banking industry, where most tasks, previously involving a well-defined pattern, were for the most part repetitive. Thus, the industry has become well suited for the implementation of electronic automated procedures that possibly may not exist a decade or two hence of present bank jobs obsolete.

Overseas, where banking is organized and aware of impending events through their unions, both white collar and union bank employees are actively involved in the financial sector, reflected by this comment in an Australian bank publication: "It is the checkless society a science-fiction mutt that will transform banks into glorified spacious slot machines or picture-tab terminal stations, or is it a hallucination of the technocrats - electronic on-line?"

That question is likely to reverberate through the board rooms of banks all over the world for many years to come.

A team of nine Harvard Business School researchers, joint authors of a book entitled, "An Electronic Cash and Credit System," confidently predict that in the U.S. first, and in other countries following the electronic road, transactions by cash or check "will become as outdated as the barter system."" 

Electronic revolution

Their prediction is supported by no less an authority than George W. Mitchell, a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, who recently asserted: "The banking structure as it is known today may not exist a decade from now. Electronic data processing is on the verge of changing the very nature of money."

"The Diebold Group, Inc., a leading New York manage-ment consulting firm, recently conducted a survey among 2,000 financial executives and bankers. For a 20-month period, the Diebold Group was 'the development of a national and largely integrated system of electronic money and money transfer is irresistible over the next 15 years.' New developments in this direction are coming fast. First National City Bank, a multi-national and New York's largest, has mailed what it calls Citicards to its 80,000 checking account customers. Using the cards, Firman can pass through the electronic authorization system, will be able to cash checks at any of its 226 branches.

"Basically, it is said to be an optically readable pattern of "colors" embedded within the cards. This technology is outside the human visible spectrum and is read by a device atop merchant or teller terminals. City- bank has applied for patents on the device."

Currently, Citibank revealed that its on-line computer system includes 1,500 terminals in the bank's branches and 1,200 terminals participating in MasterCharge retail establish-ments.

The encoding question is important, analysts say, because of its direction and speed of eventually implementing a national system for transferring checks electronically as an alternative to checks. The process, in ef-fect, is being pitted against the so-called "checkless society" system for encoding information adopted as the banking-industry standard by the American Bankers Association.

Impact on jobs

Whichever system finally prevails, the impact will be felt on the present jobs of all middle-management bank employees down to junior clerks, cashiers and tellers who become obsolete as they are replaced by computers and au-tomated devices.

The people who see money relegated to small change in the current American financial scene cite two reasons: 1. The avalanche of paper work which accompanies modern retail cashing checks, and 2. The proliferation of credit cards which can easily be lost or stolen.

"It seemed a dream a very short time ago has now become actual reality with computers in supermarkets being linked up with banks which can answer checks, or by means of a visual display unit note that the bank balance of a customer is sufficient to cover the cost of the purchase. The whole process takes less than 10 seconds, less time than it takes to write a check."

Elimination of the work, time, and cost involved in processing billions of checks has a special profit appeal to bankers. It costs only 5 cents to process a check electronically, against 16 cents for paper checks.

British view

Commenting on the direction in which the technological revolution is heading, the Brit-ish periodic, The Economist, recently had this to say: "The economic efficiency with which we can make mathe-matical and other logical calculations has increased by a factor of more than 10,000 during the past decade and a half, and the raw mechanical cost of making these calculations is still coming down at a pace that is faster than any other vital serv-ice or product has ever fallen in history."

"During 1972-73 this will continue, at least at a modified rate. It is probable that the cost of performing each given computer task will just about halve every three years for some time to come. Indeed, it will come down more quickly than this when we at last organize our-selves for sensible time-sharing of mass use of these machines."

These new bank automation developments are food for sobering thought on the part of all bank employees who, as The Economist writer points out, have one great advantage - the power of common sense. In their own self-protection and that of their families they urgently need to organize now before it is too late.

They must avoid the histor-ical mistake of other unorgan-ized groups who allowed their common sense to remain unex-ploited in the face of cata-strophic technological change.