Union membership pays in offices, BLS shows

In the most strongly organized segment of the white-collar field, among clerical employees, the average union wage was $7,104, or 20% higher than the $5,989 average for nonunion clerical workers, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics study. The study, based on 1970 figures, found the following other key differences between organized and unorganized employees:

- The average union employee is older, earns more money, and is more likely to be a white male than his nonunion counterpart.
- Only some 10% of white collar and service workers were unionized, against nearly 40% of all blue collar workers.

Earnings of union members tended to be more equalized than those of nonunion employees who were clustered at the extremes of the wage scale.

One out of every four of non-union workers earned less than $5,000 annually, compared with 11% of union members.

130 start new year as OPEIU members

Approximately 130 more members were brought into new OPEIU bargaining units as the old year closed. About half of the new members are Canadian.

President Romeo Corbell reports that the Quebec Labour Relations Board has certified Montreal Local 57 as bargaining representative of three groups of secretaries and office employees at school boards in the area. They are the Regional School Boards of Tailon (St. Hubert), Yamaika, and Brossard, with 37, 12 and 14 employees, respectively.

In the U.S., Cleveland Local 17 was chosen in a National Labor Relations Board election as bargaining representative by office employees at the Lake Shore Electric Corporation in Bedford, Ohio, by a margin of better than 2-to-1.

In Denver, Local 5 was the unanimous choice of office employees at the OCAW Pension Fund.

In another Ohio election contested by the Teamsters, President James P. Whelan of Local 19 reports that the OPEIU was the overwhelming choice to represent a 30-member office unit at the Ohio Plate Glass Company in Toledo. The Teamsters failed to get a single vote.

In Los Angeles, Local 30 won a 23-member office unit at the Glass Container Corporation in an election conducted by the NLRB, Business Manager Gwen Newton reports.

Executive Board approves CLC-OPEIU understandings

At the Executive Board's semi-annual meeting in San Diego, Calif., in December, the following action was taken:

(1) The board accepted a report submitted on understandings reached on white-collar organizing in Canada at a meeting between President Howard Coughlin and Vice Presidents Ron Bom and Romeo Corbell with Canadian Labour Congress officers. The delegation reported that CLC recognizes that the OPEIU has prior jurisdictional rights in the pure white-collar field defined as including banks, finance, insurance and real estate companies, home offices, stock exchanges, and similar establishments. CLC also agreed to make available such organizing assistance as may be practicable to OPEIU-initiated organizing campaigns in units of significant size.

(2) The board received a partial report from a special committee set up to study Canadian union autonomy. Because the committee plans further meetings, action was withheld on recommendations until the full report is presented.

(3) The board agreed that its first joint meeting, held concurrently last summer with the full-time field staff in Atlanta, Ga., was highly successful. It decided that both groups will meet again consecutively in Montreal, Canada, from June 15 to June 21.

(4) The board evaluated the latest series of Educational Conferences held during the fall. It recommended that future ones be held on Fridays and confined to one-half day on Saturdays, and that the registration fee for delegates be "no more than $10." It also agreed that the Erie Conference be held separately in the spring.

(5) The board discussed at length the importance of funneling union business and deposits into OPEIU-organized banks. It urged Vice Presidents, International Representatives, and officers of OPEIU Locals to do all in their power to induce other unions and union members to transact all their banking business with unionized banks.

(6) President Coughlin reported that four women candidates, chosen from applicants replying to his letter, will attend a one-week training course in February at the AFL-CIO Labor College, in Washington, D.C. They will receive two additional weeks of training at New York Local 153.

(7) The board noted that OPEIU successes in organizing Blue Cross/Blue Shield employees have attracted other unions (unaffiliated with AFL-CIO) to attempt campaigns in this field. It urged all OPEIU locals, wherever BC/BS offices are located, to initiate organizing drives in order to keep such competitors out of this area.

(8) Acting on an appeal from a number of Local 5 members in Denver, Colo., the board referred the matter back to the local for further consideration.

400 in Buffalo get full raises

The Pay Board has approved 35¢ an hour increases, plus 5¢ an hour grade raises, for 400 clerical and technical employees represented by Local 212 at Worthington Corporation in Buffalo, N.Y., Business Manager Emile M. Steck reports.

Negotiated in January 1972, the raises are retroactive to August 16, 1971, the day after President Nixon announced the wage-price freeze.

The 10% increases above the board's guidelines were approved in light of "facts relating to historical wage relationships with other employees in the pump and compressor industry, and facts relating to (past) pattern of bargaining in this industry." The board said that the "equitable position of the employees involved and the need to prevent gross inequities" to employees justify the full increases.
Citing a continued need for some form of incoheses policy, the committee’s Democratic Senators and Congressmen suggest the following changes in the contracts program:

- Exemption of all firms with fewer than 1,000 employees.
- Exemption of state and local government employees.
- Exemption of all workers earning less than $3.50 an hour.

The committee says the exemptions it urges are general ones, and would not apply to the construction industry or medical services, both of which are “characterized either by supply shortages which will take time to correct, or by an industry structure which gives even small firms or unions a significant degree of monopoly power.”

Our view is that the court erred. The bank clearly violated the law; the female employees certainly did not. Why then should the guilty institution be rewarded to the tune of $12,100 at the expense of these 13 female employees who were forced to forfeit wages they were entitled to in justice and fairness? It may be called justice in legal terminology, but it can hardly be called social justice.

If we were these victimized bank employees, we wouldn’t let the matter rest. We would promptly move to unionize under the OPEIU banner. Spirited action like this could help ignite the cause of unionism among 650,000 other female bank employees across the nation who allow themselves to be exploited.

Until a case like this sparks a militant nationwide movement by office women into the ranks of white-collar unionsism, they will continue to be victimized by scofflaw employers shortchanging them because of their sex.
Peter Brennan— a fine choice

We have always contended that a representative of organized labor should rightfully be chosen as Secretary of Labor. However, with the exception of President Eisenhower in the early part of his first term, Presidents of the United States have appointed labor leaders for this position.

A couple of weeks ago, President Nixon surprised the country by appointing Peter Brennan, President of the New York City and New York State Building Trades Councils, as Secretary of Labor. It was a pleasant surprise to your president and numerous other friends of Peter Brennan.

Peter, as is known in the New York area, is an excellent trade unionist and has compiled a brilliant record as a leader of the Building Trades in the State of New York. His activities in the trade union movement were not limited to the building trades. Peter is well known for helping and assisting numerous local unions of the AFL-CIO, other than those in the building trades. He is an energetic, hard working and dedicated labor leader.

Your President has known Peter Brennan for approximately 25 years. We became friendly when Pete was a Business Representative for the Painters immediately after World War II. In subsequent years, we became close personal friends.

Pete is a registered Democrat who, as late as 1968, led a labor commission for the reelection of President Humphrey as President. On the other hand, he was active in the re-election campaigns of Nelson Rockefeller in 1962, 1966 and 1970. Along with a host of labor leaders in the New York area, he regularly met with Governor Rockefeller and helped coordinate the efforts of the Governor's administration in one of the most outstanding pro-labor records in the United States.

New York, for example, is one of only two states which pay unemployment insurance benefits during strikes. New York’s minimum wage has consistently been higher than that of the federal government during the Rockefeller Administration and presently is 25¢ an hour higher. At Pete’s urging, the Governor enacted numerous other pro-labor measures such as, for example, that which provided for elections and subsequent collective bargaining for hospital workers in the non-profit field.

Peter Brennan will do an outstanding job as Secretary of Labor. He will rigidly enforce all aspects of the Walsh-Healey Act. He will upgrade apprenticeship training. Occupational safety will not merely be a pharse. He will fight for the enactment of higher minimum wages and will continue to press President Nixon for the elimination of wage rate ceilings. He will represent equal opportunity laws and in my opinion, despite some statements to the contrary, he will create greater opportunities for minority groups, even in the building trades. The New York Plan, which provides for training for adults in the building trades, is a credit to the leadership and fair play of Peter Brennan.

President Nixon is to be commended for his appointment of Peter Brennan as Secretary of Labor. We must also commend President Nixon for his reappointment of John Fanning to the National Labor Relations Board. We are hopeful that these two appointments reflect a change of thinking on the part of the National Administration and that these appointments will be followed by numerous other indications of a more liberal attitude toward organized labor.

Kaiser negotiations bring $1,500 increase

Wage raises totaling nearly $1,500 per member over two years were negotiated last week by Local 29 for its 950-member office bargaining unit at Kaiser Foundations in Oakland and Alameda County, Calif., according to Thomas J. Thompson, Sr. Business Representative Joe Nedham.

The pact calls for a $2 per month pay increase retroactive to May 1 and an additional $42 monthly in May 1975. Employees received $35 of the initial raise immediately, amounting to a 5.5% increase, the remaining $125 to be paid if the Pay Board approves.

First year fringe benefits fall within the board's 0.7% limit. These include a five-week vacation after 15 years and an additional holiday (floating), making the annual total 10. Extra pay for part-time employees, in lieu of fringe benefits, was increased to 25¢ from 20¢ an hour.

Oakland local wraps up agreements for 3 groups

2 Vallejo units move forward

A 5% across-the-board salary boost, plus an improved auto allowance, were gained in identical one-year contracts negotiated by Oakland Local 29 for its bargaining units at the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Vallejo and at the Vallejo Housing Authority, Sr. Business Representative Joe Nedham reports.

The agreements set a starting minimum annual salary of $6,084 in the lowest classification and a $7,392 maximum. In the top grade, the salary ranges from a $17,028 minimum to a $21,408 annual maximum.

Employees authorized or required to use their own cars to perform their duties shall be reimbursed each month at the rate of 13¢ per mile for the first 500 miles, and 10¢ per mile thereafter.

It was also agreed that Local 29 will conduct a study to upgrade certain positions at the two agencies. Business Representative Louis A. Celaya headed the OPEIU negotiating team.

Grand advance in Ontario

A packet of wage increases and fringe benefits approximating $1,000 per member over two years was gained in a new contract negotiated by Local 151 for its office unit at Anson General Hospital, in Irregular Falls, Ont.

Retroactive to May 1, 1972, the agreement calls for an across-the-board $27 per month increase in the first year and a similar boost on the same 1973 date.

A new vacation schedule provides two weeks after one year, three after five, four after 15, and five after 25 years. Statutory holidays now include "Civic Holiday.

The employer also agreed to pay total costs of premiums for Ontario hospital insurance protection and group life insurance.

Local 393 wins awards for trio

An NLRB panel finds that Dempsey Key Punch Service, Inc., of Grand Blanc and Drayton Plains, Mich., was guilty of unfair labor practice charges as charged by Flint Local 393. It ruled that three

HONORED FOR UNION SERVICE: Local 39 President Marion Sachtjen receiving plaque naming her as Madison Federation of Labor's "Union Leader of the Month" for November from Federation President Marvin Marinka. Mrs. Sachtjen, who re-attended her funeral later in the month, is the wife of President Charles F. Felix, Jr., CUNA Mutual and CUMIS Insurance Boards, and CUMIS Board Chairman P. G. Grooth, and (at right) CUNA Mutual Board Chairman Robert Klett. Employed at CUNA Mutual for 21 years, Mrs. Sachtjen heads the OPEIU bargaining unit for the staff of the credit union's world headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.
Union life insurance firm moves into new office

OPEIU President Howard Coughlin was among 200 union leaders, government officials and other dignitaries attending dedication ceremonies marking the opening of a new headquarters for American Income Life Insurance Company in Waco, Texas. American Income is known as the "union insurance company," serving thousands of union families across the nation. Fort Worth Local 277 is bargaining agent for its 185 office employees, and recently signed a first contract covering its 500 agents, public relations personnel, and clerical employees of its agencies, which do business in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

At the dedication, company president Bernard Rapoport said that American Income believes that "in this society, when you take something you have to give something back. We run a business to make a profit, but we try to leave a little here and a little there. We try not to talk about earning, but to demonstrate caring among our employees."

An Indiana chartered company, American Income moved its major operations to Waco in 1959. In the intervening years, its office staff has nearly tripled, has outgrown two previous locations. Life insurance has increased from $39 million to $300 million; premium income from $3.3 million to $21.5 million, and assets from $3.3 million to $39 million.

$3,850 obtained in Pittsburgh

Across-the-board wage raise averaging some $3,850 per individual over three years, plus an improved health-welfare benefits, were gained in a new contract negotiated by Local 33 for its office staff at Mack Trucks, Inc., in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Business Representative Theodore P. Homitz reports that the settlement calls for a 29¢ hourly general increase, retroactive to Dec. 18, 1971; 32¢ on the same 1972 date, and 34¢ on the 1973 anniversary. The pact runs to January 31, 1975.

Starting Dec. 18, 1973, the contract sets a minimum wage in the lowest office category of $3.68 an hour, or $168.30 per week, rising to a $176.60 weekly maximum. The lowest classification includes shop clerk, typist-clerk, general clerk, and file clerk. In the top classification of senior accounting clerk, a $4.63 hourly minimum ($185.20 per week) rises to a $195.20 weekly maximum.