New Mexico Bank Unit Votes 9-to-1 for OPEIU

Clerical employees at Grant County Bank in Silver City, New Mexico, in a National Labor Relations Board election voted overwhelmingly by a nine-to-one margin for representation by the OPEIU.

The campaign among the Silver City bank employees was directed by Local 62 President Charles P. Hogeboom of Santa Rita, N.M. International Representative Joe McGee presented the case at the NLRB hearing.

In ordering the Grant County Bank election, NLRB Regional Director Milo V. Price included tellers, business machine operators, bookkeepers, collectors and secretaries in the bargaining unit. He rejected the employer's contention that there is uncertainty as to whether NLRB's retail jurisdictional standards should apply to banks and as to what constitutes the specific dollar volume of income necessary for that jurisdiction.

In issuing the election order, Price said: "In cases involving banking institutions, the board has relied on commerce facts pertaining to both their gross volume and the inflow or outflow of their funds across state lines. The Board has held that the impact on commerce of banks and other financial institutions may be measured by either the retail or nonretail standard."

International Representative Brian Fahlin reports that he has organized a 22-member office unit at Greer & Partners, a large law firm in Vancouver, B.C.

International Representative Gene Dwyer reports that he has organized another group among employees of the Department of Public Works, Jackson, N.J., who voted in a Public Employee Relations Commission election for Local 142 of Jersey City to represent them as bargaining agent.

Social Security Benefits
Go Up 8% in July Checks

An 8% increase in benefits for 35 million Social Security recipients was announced by the U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare which says the higher benefit will be included in July checks.

This means an extra $16 per month to the average retired male worker over 65, now receiving $154 monthly, and $27 to the average over-65 couple's check now totaling $314.

The current minimum will now become $93.80 for male workers over 65, and current maximum will rise to $316.30. The average disabled worker's monthly benefit will be $224, a 17% increase.

In Supplemental Security Income, individual maximum monthly benefits will be increased $11.70 to $157.70, and a couple's maximum monthly payment will increase $17.60 to $236.60.

The increases go into effect in June for Social Security recipients and in July for Supplemental Security Income recipients.

Under the law, Social Security and S.S.I. benefits are increased automatically when the Consumer Price Index rises by 3% or more over a given period. The 8% increase represents the difference between the average monthly CPI of the second 1974 quarter and the first quarter of 1975.

Banking Feels No Pain; Not True of Employees

Layoffs are widespread in most industries but it's no hard to guess what industry is feeling relatively few pains.

Charles H. Fischer of the American Bankers Association reports that banks are continuing to hire and the bank work force has grown from one million in January 1972 to more than 1.2 million in November 1974.

There's one catch: most banks are not unionized and the pay is low.

OPEIU to Mark Women's Year

See story on Page 3 and editorial on Page 2 on international observance of Women's Year.

NLRB Issues Guidelines For Hospital Organizing

The National Labor Relations Board has issued guidelines for formation of collective bargaining units by employees of non-profit hospitals and nursing homes.

In its rulings which involved eight different representation cases, the board said:

- Registered nurses are entitled to join a bargaining unit separate and apart from other professional employees.
- Technical employees, "those whose specialized training, skills, education and job requirements are not the community of interest not shared by other service and maintenance employees," may bargain separately. This includes technicians in the fields of x-ray, respiratory care, infant care, laboratory, pharmacy, housekeeping, operating rooms, orthopedics and licensed practical nurses.
- Business Clericals Separate
- Clerical workers in business offices are entitled to a separate bargaining unit, but clerical workers employed in hospital wards are grouped in service and maintenance units.
- Service and maintenance employees are treated as separate bargaining units. These include aids, janitors, porters and orderlies, employees in dietary care, coffee shops, housekeeping cafeterias, store rooms, boiler rooms, morgue assistants, pharmacy aides, dark room work and EEG and EKG technicians.
- In keeping with the congressional intention, the board turned down a separate unit for telephone switchboard operators, rejected a separate unit for stationary engineers who maintain boilers and perform maintenance chores, and refused to establish a unit of "patient care" employees consisting of nursing assistants, occupational and recreational therapists and ward secretaries.

NRL's "Distinct Interests"

Nonetheless, a three-member majority—including the board's new chairman, Betty Southard Murphy, and members John Fanning and Howard Jenkins, Jr.—declared that registered nurses have "distinct interests" that justify a separate bargaining unit.

In a footnote to that decision, the majority declared they would consider a unit for professional employees appropriate, excluding registered nurses, if such a unit had been sought by a labor union. However, they added they weren't considering the question of whether a bargaining unit could be composed solely of physicians, residents or interns on a hospital staff.

The guidelines, which could be a crucial factor in union organizing among hospital employees, indicate that unions won't be able to try to organize narrow groups of workers. In organizing drives, they often try to single out a small, easily identified group, while employers often argue that bargaining units cover large numbers of people which sometimes makes organizing considerably more difficult.

Union activity in hospitals and nursing homes has grown rapidly since Congress last year amended the National Labor Relations Act to cover private, nonprofit, health-care institutions. Profit-making institutions were already covered.

OPEIU Charge Against Firm Upheld

NLRB Judge Finds Kroehler Violated Labor Law

A union may bargain about existing benefits for employees after they unionize but an employer also may not threaten to withdraw benefits before an election to gain collective bargaining rights.

Peterson ordered the company to reinstate fringe benefits unilaterally withheld from its office employees at the Charlotte plant after they unionized, to make them whole for any losses suffered as a result, and to notify employees collectively before any other changes are made in working conditions.

Representing the OPEIU were International Representative Dan McShain and Local 482 members Dianna Camarita, Karen McGuir, Judy Morrow and Cindy Long. They testified that following certification of the unit on October 17 last the first bargaining session was held on November 13 when Norman Chimeni, a director of industrial relations, informed them that on the next Monday all employee benefits would be suspended.

These included excused absenteeism and tardiness for which a point system would be installed; absence for medical or dental appointments which previously existed, as well as pay eliminated for three holidays—Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Judy Morrow, a negotiating committee member employed by Kroehler for 5½ years, corroborated the testimony of other witnesses. She added, however, that Chimeni stated that "all benefits were being suspended because there was no contract to support them."

Linda Fanning, another witness, testified that her supervisor told her when she was hired that the company gave a day's leave and leave whenever it was necessary to take a child to a doctor, and also gave paid holidays on Thanksgiving and Christmas. She said that she was ill in November for two days, went to her doctor, but even though she had a doctor's certificate she was not paid for the two days.

NLRB counsel said that under the new company program if an employee accumulated six absences he or she could be terminated although in the past permission was given for absenteeism, tardiness or leaving early. He said that, in his view, an employee may bargain about existing benefits but that an employer cannot "take them away from employees unilaterally."

He added that the elimination of well-established privileges at the outset of bargaining "clearly frustrates the statutory objectives of collective bargaining and constitutes a flagrant violation of the Act."

He ordered Kroehler to post a notice for 60 days announcing that it was reinstating holiday pay for employees; withdraw its absenteeism control program and restore its past practice of compensating employees for leave taken for sickness or medical reasons.
Arbitrator Upholds New Haven Local Orders K. of C. to Remove Adverse Memos from Steward's File

The Knights of Columbus must remove from the personal file of Kathy Foley, an OPEIU steward at its national headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut, adverse notations concerning her work record inserted by a supervisor whom she had personality conflicts, an arbitrator has ruled.

The case arose when Ms. Foley invited her right-hand union contract to inspect the file, after which she griped about the inflexibility and bureaucracy of the superiors. She claimed that these problems were not only discriminatory but also inadequate for effective representation.

International Representative for the FIET, Mr. Sproule, expressed his support for the case, arguing that under terms of the contract employees had the right to inspect their personnel files at any time and to grieve if they disagree with the contents.

The agreement establishes a 37-hour workweek, with an additional wage increase for employees in the top grades. The agreement also includes a plan for fringe benefits and insurance.

The agreement provides for union representation, pay for bereavement, travel allowances, and a pension plan. The company agreed to pay 30% of an hourly premium for women's equal rights, which would include general education and training.

The unit negotiating team assisted Swanson comprised John DeFrey, G. Sproule, Sue Prefontaine and John Tulett. The agreement runs to August 14, 1976.

Pact Renewal Signed For Mining Unit

A contract renewal negotiated by Local 15 for its 60-member clerical and technical unit in Utah Mines Ltd., in Port Hardy, B.C., calls for an hourly wage increase ranging from $1.41 to $1.77 for those in lower grades. The agreement is set up under the collective bargaining system and includes an integrated pension plan.

The agreement includes a plan for fringe benefits and insurance, which would include general education and training.

The agreement also includes a plan for union representation, pay for bereavement, travel allowances, and a pension plan. The company agreed to pay 30% of an hourly premium for women's equal rights, which would include general education and training.
The United Nations has named 1975 as International Women's Year, the observation of which meets with the fullest support of the OPEU.

The general goals of International Women's Year are also praiseworthy:

(1) To promote equality of rights and opportunities for all women.
(2) To ensure full participation of women in International and national life, without discrimination of any kind, to ensure freedom of choice and the development of individual potential.
(3) To recognize the contributions and responsibilities of women and their increasingly important role in economic, social, and political advancement.
(4) To increase women's participation in the development and advancement of friendly relations and cooperation among states and in the strengthening of international cooperation.

Throughout its history, the OPEU has been in the forefront of the fight for equal rights and equal pay for women workers doing the same work as men. We are able to do this not only because of the huge contribution our employers where women elect to become members of our union.

20% Wage Differential

Unfortunately, only a very small percentage of women who work to belong to our office union, especially when we remember that the OPEU represents five million women in the work force. As a result, women as a group still suffer all kinds of discrimination.

The President's Council of Economic Advisors estimates that there's a 20% wage difference between public employees earning because of this sex discrimination.

The median annual wage for year-round, full-time workers is $3,558 for women and $5,148 for men. And this differential is getting worse.

During the past few years, women's earnings have declined from 63.9% to 57.9% of men's earnings. Because the vast majority of women workers are not organized, they remain unprotected against sex discrimination by employers.

The National Right-to-Work Committee's sponsorship of such a speaker is indicative of the true feelings of the Committee itself.

There is a movement afoot to force the committee and its counterpart, the Legal Defense Foundation, to register with the Department in accordance with the terms of the Landrum-Griffin Act which provides that such paid anti-union spokesmen must file reports with the government. Such registration would force the National Right-to-Work Committee to make known names of its supporters.

Rud Learen of the Committee is fighting this movement tooth-and-nail. He considers the pending suit a form of courtroom harassment that unions have mounted against the Committee.

Actually, however, this suit does not in any way compare with the actions taken against unions by the committee's Legal Defense Foundation. Businessmen, who have privately supported the Committee and the Foundation, are too few to have their support publicized.

However, these suits are not the slightest bit redundant to bend the law in order to achieve their goals.

Last summer, for example, Arizona Republican Congressman Sam Steiger sent out a letter on behalf of the committee and the Foundation, seeking U.S. citizen's support for the abolition of the union shop. It was printed on paper bearing a facsimile of the official House of Representatives letterhead.

As a result of this well-financed activity is designed to weaken unions, eliminate collective bargaining, and set workers back 40 years before the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act. It is imperative that workers know the National Right-to-Work Committee for the enemy it is!
AFL-CIO Gives Pledge on Seniority
Says It Will Oppose All Efforts to Dilute or Destroy System

The AFL-CIO will support every valid effort to protect workers threatened by the recession but will oppose "any and all efforts to weaken or dilute the seniority of the workers." Through legislative action, court decision or administrative action, an AFL-CIO Executive Council statement says.

The statement reaffirmed the long-held AFL-CIO position that "the principle is not only a solution to unemployment and discrimination. And we will not stand idly by while a few work-ers are being jacked up against the right to be unemployed."

In an effort to limit the economic impact of rising unemployment some unions have negotiated provisions for early retirement, sharing of reduced work during a temporary emergency period and other voluntary agreement, the council noted.

In contrast to this voluntary approach, however, "there have been calls for the destruction of the seniority system and creation of a new principle of 'non-seniority' or the imposition of forced work sharing," the council said. Some federal, state and local officials suggested their readiness to prescribe regulations for guidelines for such programs, the statement added.

American workers, regardless of race, the council asserted, "do not think it iniquitous that the more senior workers are protected in times of layoff." The principle was widely accepted that "the longer service employee has priority in job allocation. Forced work sharing violates this principle."

"It is nothing more than 'poverty-sharing' by forcing all workers to share the brunt of economic downturn, work-sharing inevitably would tear apart the solidarity necessary to achieve real economic gains for all workers," the statement concluded.

Team which negotiated new contract at Baton Rouge, La., Water Works, recently detailed in White Collar, is shown in lobby of company's building. Front row from left are: OPEIU Committee member Wilson Smith; behind him Emil Demcheck, OPEIU Regional Director Frank Morton, and company's D. J. Doyle, executive vice-president and Sec-Treas. Rear row from left: Local 428 Sec.-Treas. George Vanner, OPEIU committee members Clarence Jackson and Ed Harris; Local 428 President Lionel Lee, and company vice-president E. D. Roberts, Jr. Bob Johnson and Wallie Broad, other company officials participating in the negotiations were not present when picture was taken.

Eugene X. Pelletier, Local 269 President

We regret to announce the death after a long illness of Eugene X. Pelletier, President of Local 269, in Chicopee, Mass., an office he had held for 25 years.

Employed at Spalding Company for 47 years, he had always been active in the Labor Movement and had served as Vice President of the Hampden County Central Labor Council. He was also active in community and labor projects in Springfield, Holyoke. Northampton and the Chicopee area.

Local 269 Sec.-Treas. Gilbert LaValley expressed the feeling of the members in a statement: "Gone Pelletier's death saddens all of us. He was a dedicated and selfless labor leader, unwavering in his lifelong devotion to those he represented. He was a skilled negotiator with forbearance and fortitude that gained him the admiration of union members and management alike."

Dime Store Chain Learns Dirty Tricks Boomerang

F. W. Woolworth Company has to cough up $27.40 plus $100 in attorney's fees for a Milwaukee Local 9 for postage it paid on unsolicited authorization cards mailed back to the union during an organizing campaign in December 1973 and February 1974. The union charged that the five-and-dime chain had restrained and coerced its employees during the organizing campaign at the central accounting office when four supervisors confiscated union literature distributed to employees' work places prior to their starting time, and then mailed back large quantities of unsigned authorization cards.

Administrative Judge Ancie F. Scheinman upheld Local 9's charge that this conduct violated Sec. 8 (a) (1) of the Act by restraining and coercing its employees from joining the union. She also decided that the company had no right against such distribution and that in the circumstances the company's concession had "no merit" that it had the "right to mail back unsolicited authorization cards because the "printed legend thereon so requested."" She further ordered the company to post a notice in its central accounting office declaring that it would "cease and desist from similar conduct in the future, or in any manner "restrain or coerce our employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed in the National Labor Relations Act."

U.S. Price Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>149.9</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>150.9</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>151.9</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>151.9</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>152.9</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>153.2</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>153.2</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>153.2</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>153.2</td>
<td>1970-1971 Base</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadian Price Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Statistics Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>178.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>178.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>178.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>178.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>