Executive Board Amends Strike Benefit Rules

At its semi-annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., following the Western Educational Conference held in that city, the Executive Board among other actions elected a new Vice President, took steps to bolster the depleted Strike Fund, and approved the Twenty-eight years old, Kirkland is the youngest Vice President ever elected to the board. He began his union career as a staff organizer for Portland Local 11 and was named an International Representative in 1973.

Informed by President Coughlin that the Strike Benefit Fund had been depleted almost $1,000,000 during the past year as a result of four lengthy strikes at Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Buffalo, N.Y., and New York, Wyoming and Alaska, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Walter E. Engelbert and at the Insurance Company of B.C. in Vancouver, Canada, the board studied various steps to protect the integrity of the Fund that guarantees payments to future striking members.

It then amended the Strike Benefit Plan in several ways. At the onset of a strike, President Coughlin will notify the Local union of the maximum number of weekly payments that will be made at the current rate with the provision that the number of payments “may be extended if the condition of the Strike Benefit Fund permits.”

Additionally, before strike authorization is granted an International Representative may be dispatched to investigate the particular strike situation and will then notify the President, enabling him to have a better picture of the issues at stake and perhaps helping to bring about a strike-free settlement.

It was also decided that until the Fund is more viable, strike benefits will no longer be paid to OPEIU members honoring the picket lines of other unions.

The board held a lengthy discussion on the need for accelerated new organizing activities as the strike fund erodes to National and Local levels. It urged all Local unions to become more involved in new organizing efforts, particularly in the public sector, and among employees at banks, hospitals and Blue Cross/Blue Shield offices who are ripe for unionization.

The board spent an entire day discussing the impact of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), on the OPEIU Pension Plan.

This meeting was attended by Sr. Vice President Sidney Braverman.

(Continued on page 4)

New London Strike Ends; Unions Win 47% Packet

A 43-month agreement providing wage gains totaling 41% over the period, with greatly improved fringe benefits, ended a long and costly strike of 10,000 members of the Metal Trades Council—excluding about 1,200 Local 106 members—against the General Dynamics Electric Boat Division at New London, Conn.

The total value of the contract, with wages and fringe benefits combined, is about a 47% increase over the last year of the previous three-year pact.

The settlement of the long strike was reached under the mediation of W. J. Usery, Jr., director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, two assistants and a state mediator.

Representing OPEIU members in the joint negotiations with the New London Metal Trades Council were Local 106 President Ray Winklebleck and Vice President Carl Orsini.

The new pact provides a 13% general wage increase in the first year; an 18¢ per hour COLA adjustment on July 1, 1976; a 6% across-the-board raise on each of the two following anniversary dates; a 10¢ per hour COLA adjustment thirty months after signing, and another 6% general increase on the third anniversary date. It sets a starting rate of $3.64 an hour in the lowest office grade, raising to $4.38 a week in the final contract year, and in the top classifications of radiography film inspectors and auditors a starting rate of $5.23, rising to $7.34 an hour maximum.

Group insurance and medical benefits were liberalized, the company increasing A&D&D benefits by $3 per week in each classification. The maximum rate will be $105 per week in the first year, rising to $120 in the final year.

The hospital room and board allowance was raised to $75 per day in the first year, and will be increased by $5 each year to $90 in the final year. Major medical was increased to $50,000 (was $15,000), and will be raised to $75,000 on July 1, 1977.

A new dental plan will take effect 24 months after signing of the contract and will cover employees and their dependents who are eligible to receive benefits under the company’s medical benefit program.

Employees who retire after July 1, 1975, but prior to July 1, 1976, will receive a benefit of $6.50 per month for each year of credited service, which will be adjusted to $7.50 per month with the first payment on July 1, 1976.

Pension benefits will be raised to $8 per month on July 1, 1977, to $9 on the third contract anniversary, and to $10 per month 42 months after signing the contract, an increase of more than 50%. Disability benefits will also be adjusted to match the higher fringe level benefits for employees who retire on disability and on after such effective dates.

Blue Cross Pact Wins 18% Pay Boost

Milwaukee Unit Also Gains Better Fringe Benefits

A two-year agreement providing pay increases totaling 18% over the period has been renegotiated by Milwaukee Local 9 for its 700-member unit at Blue Cross of Wisconsin in its main office and ten satellite branches throughout the state, Business Manager Edward J. Kubicki and International Representative Mike Walker report.

The agreement, retroactive to November 10, provides 10% salary increases across-the-board in the first year with an additional 8% to take effect on the same date. With the initial increases, weekly salaries will range from $101.91 for beginning messengers to $222.43 for senior computer programmers.

The agreement also provides an improved pension plan, a 11th holiday—a floater to be named by the company—and four weeks vacation after 12 rather than 14 years of service.

A new summer hours provision in the contract revises the employee’s hours of work for the period from May 21 through September 3. Under the plan, employees continue to work a 37½-hour week but take a half-hour rather than an hour for lunch every day and leave at three o’clock on Fridays.

An improved snow emergency leave provision removes the requirement that employees must work the majority of their shift to receive full pay on a snow emergency day declared by the city. Employees will now receive a full day’s pay for working on a snow emergency day, regardless of how long they work.

Although the contract continues a “bumper day” provision under which employees do not receive sick pay for the first day of absence, employees who are sent home by the company nurse will receive full pay for all days of absence. In addition, (Continued on page 3)

St. Louis Blue Shield Office Joins OPEIU

The OPEIU organized its first Blue Cross/Blue Shield office in St. Louis, when Local 13 won an election among 170 office employees at Missouri Medical Services, Inc. (Blue Shield of Missouri), by a vote of 121-to-49, climaxing a campaign lasting almost three years. Some 60 other Blue Cross/Blue Shield offices are still unorganized, mostly in cities and towns where OPEIU Locals already exist.

Local 13 President Tom O’Brien and Business Representative George O’Brien, who jointly conducted the campaign, report that recently management hired some efficiency experts. The latter concluded that if layoffs became likely such could be avoided by attrition. Citing the experts’ report to management, employees were assured them on job security. But shortly thereafter it about-faced and fired 22 employees. Resistance immediately flared up, but the remaining were now convinced that their best job assurance was a union contract.

As a result, management credits an “energetic in-office committee” which worked conscientiously to swing the St. Louis Blue Shield office into the OPEIU ranks.

He further reports that Local 13 has received certification, following a card check, as bargaining agent for a unit of 40 office employees who work in the Circuit Clerk’s office of St. Clair County. He said this victory should spur new organizing among six similar offices in the St. Louis area.

Canadian Director Romeo Corbeil announces that Montreal Local 57 has obtained certification from the Quebec Labour Relations Board for a new 200-member unit of office employees at the Montreal Credit Bureau after a long struggle with the employer.

Although an overwhelming majority had signed designation cards indicating they wanted collective bargaining, the employer refused to recognize the OPEIU and attempted to overturn the board’s ruling in a superior court action. However, the court dismissed the employer’s plea and upheld the board’s certification.

The campaign was spearheaded by Local 57 Staff Repre- (Continued on page 3)
Every $2 Gift to VOTE Gives
DPEIU More Political Clout

Another important election year has rolled around. Even if you don’t read the newspapers or listen to radio and TV news, you’d know it... because you’re going to be besieged by fund solicitations from many number of candidates for all kinds of political offices.

We’ve always encouraged our union members to contribute to the campaigns of their choice. We still do, but with this reminder:

Before you give to candidates, first give to VOTE, the DPEIU Voice of the Electorate. There’s a very practical reason for this: VOTE uses your money better. There’s more political mileage in it.

Do you know what often happens to a big chunk of the money you contribute to a candidate? He or she uses it to collect more funds.

There are recent examples of candidates—lot of them—spending as much as $1 someone gave them to collect $1.50 somewhere else through costly fund-raising mailings.

But the $2 you give to VOTE is different. In the first place, VOTE doesn’t have to spend the funds you contribute to it to collect more funds.

So every penny you give to VOTE becomes available for VOTE contributions to endorsed candidates.

And those contributions come at a time when they count most... when a candidate has to use them for direct campaign purposes like needed literature, radio/TV spots, news ads, registration and get-out-the-vote—not just to raise more money.

This makes VOTE dollars high-yield, high-velocity funds. It makes VOTE dollars count.

You don’t need a slide rule or pocket computer to figure out the arithmetic of it. It’s simple: Give $2 to a candidate and maybe half of it is used for real bread-and-butter campaigning. Give $2 to VOTE, and all of it is used the way it should be.

This is a pivotal election year. The Presidency is at stake, as well as scores of too-close-to-call U.S. House and Senate contests. Many good friends of working people face tough races. VOTE can help them. They can make the difference.

So, go ahead and give to the candidates of your choice, but first be sure to give $2 to VOTE. We use it better.

Meany Commends NLRB But Says
Statutory Reform Now Needed

The record of the National Labor Relations Board has been “commendable” and “consistently fair” toward labor, AFL-CIO President George Meany declared at the board’s 50th anniversary banquet. But Meany stressed that legislative reform of the board’s statutory base is still needed.

The National Labor Relations Act, signed into law in 1935, “is not working as well as it should, and that’s why we are here today,” Meany said.

The NLRB, Meany said, is supposed to protect, “Meany pointed out.

We want a law that provides even-handed remedies, not one that allows the J.P. Stevenses of this world to thumb their noses at the board and the courts and still receive luscious contracts,” he said. “We want a law that mandates a prompt resolution of disputes.”

Meany noted the difficulties the NLRB faces in handling an increasingly heavy caseload with a limited budget and staff and said the AFL-CIO would continue to support larger appropriations for the agency.

Labor Secretary John T. Dunlop, another speaker, warned that increasing tension between government regulation and collective bargaining faces the nation. He said he hoped the NLRB would be found to make the two systems “less antagonistic” and more compatible.

Betsy Southard Murphy, the first woman chair of the NLRB, made brief introductory remarks.

Detroit Unit Aids Blood Drive

Detroit Unit aids blood drive. The AFL-CIO Policy Committee has urged Congress to undertake an "immediate and sustained campaign" to reduce joblessness to 3 percent. The rate now is 8.3 percent.

Full employment must mean that the unemployed, at any time, would want to work as full or as temporarily as en-
trants to the labor force, people moving from one job to another or from one part of the country to another, or who are temporarily jobless as a result of seasonal fluctuations in their specific industry," the policy statement asserted.

Other essential provisions of an acceptable full-employment pro-
gram, the committee said, should:

• Require the President to submit annual "targets, policies and programs" to Congress, detailing ways to achieve full employment and to meet national needs.

• Require the President to propose specific federal tax, mone-
try and budget policies to be pursued for full employment, bal-
anced economic growth and national needs.

• Set up a consultative body, composed of major groups in the economy, to review the President’s goals and policies.

• Establish procedures for prompt Congressional review and action on the President’s economic programs.

• Require the Federal Reserve Board to "justify" to the Presi-
dent and Congress the manner in which its monetary policies will help meet full employment targets.

The Committee said Congress must realize that an obsession with budget deficits ignores the benefits of a full-employment economy—more jobs and higher earnings, reduced unemployment benefits and interest on the federal debt, reduced savings and investment and greater tax receipts.

The panel called for a policy statement to every member of Congress and offered the AFL-CIO’s assistance to legislators in drafting a proposed full employment law that will meet labor’s goal of “jobs at decent wages for everyone able to work and seeking work.”

We sincerely urge Congress and the AFL-CIO to assist its representatives, state and local unions in getting the full employment bill passed without delay. A shorter working week and the right to work will be conferred on the workers as a result of this law.

No man is an island, no man is independent, Dr. Meany declared: "The right to bargain collec-
"tively has no meaning if it is afforded a year, two years or even more after it is so granted... The time has come to act on, rather than merely give lip service to, the principle that justice delayed is justice denied.”

He noted that even in the most simple cases—a petition for representation to the NLRB—it takes an NLRB regional direc-
tor about six weeks to issue an election notice. In cases that go to the full board, the median time is 89 days.

He added that as of last April the median time from the filing of an unfair labor charge to the issuance of a board decision was...
from the desk of the 

PRESIDENT

Watergate Scandals Forgotten

The newspapers of our country and the radio and television media would have you believe that the AFL-CIO is all-powerful in the political arena through large sums of money at its disposal contributed to a voluntary basis by union members of International Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Those of you who have seen accurate reports of monies collected know that the sums raised are infinitesimal as compared to the speculators of reports. Workers who contribute are generally dedicated members who truly believe, and rightly so, that the AFL-CIO is the only spokesman for working men and women in the Halls of Congress.

Recently, to give corporations "equal power," the law was changed to allow them to set up in-house committees to solicit contributions from employees and stockholders. The Federal Election Commission, set up in the wake of the Watergate scandal with a mandate to rationalize election laws, is allowing corporations to repay expenses incurred by political action committees of those corporations in soliciting political contributions. The corporations can decide which candidates will receive financial support. The Federal Election Commission thus increases the legal authority for all companies and industrial associations to use their own funds and resources to influence the electorate.

Unfortunately, the thinking of the Federal Election Commission which did not find illegal violations by labor unions, but rather found numerous large corporations in flagrant violation of the law by expending millions of dollars of stockholders' money, sometimes in cash, to various committees set up for re-electing President Richard Nixon. The ruling of the Federal Election Commission is, in effect, widening the possibilities of abuse of power in the form of either control on the committees on employees to contribute and/or the decision to support certain political candidates without the consent of the coerced employee.

Raymond C. Christia, a middle-management executive with Baker Perkins Inc., in Saginaw, Michigan, has praised the Federal Election Commission and stated: "Your decision subjects thousands of company employees to the pressures of corporate managers to contribute to the party or causes that management deems important. It is imperative that employees be allowed to go along with management decisions. To refuse means that one is not part of the team and this is a major factor when the company considers salary increases and promotions."

"The New York Times," in a recent article entitled "The New Corporate Presence in Politics," wrote of a recent seminar conducted by management wherein an attorney in attendance was asked by an executive whether it would not be a problem if a committed employee were to contribute to a candidate not sympathetic to the company's problems. The reply, "appoints the committee."

A large chemical corporation, seven such political action committees have been set up which conceivably could provide a total of $70,000 to a single Presidential candidate next year. Corporation after corporation is getting on the bandwagon to raise political funds in the manner herein described. Corporate political action committees are proliferating in accordance with a governmental report and the pace is accelerating.

Special teams from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States are fanning out across the country from Nashua, New Hampshire, to Seattle, Washington, to advise businessmen on political contributions and to stimulate the formation of committees. The Chamber of Commerce in Chicago, whose members have stepped up their requests for political fund raising information from such organizations as the National Association of Manufacturers as well as the Federal Election Commission.

Amongst the political action committees that have formed political action committees and have registered them with the Commission are Coors, Crocker National Bank, American Express, Metropolitan Life Insurance, R. J. Reynolds, Amoco, General Electric, Lockheed Aircraft, Pullman and United States Steel. All together there are more than 200 such committees formed by business, financial and professional organizations, and another 120 have been initiated by corporations.

Federal Election Commissioner Joan D. Atkins said that much of the enthusiasm for the new method of employing corporate funds to generate political activity seems to come from a feeling among businessmen that they need to match union activity. This is a concern because such a license will raise a thousand times more money than the American labor movement has been able to raise. Their motives will be much more selfish. The National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which are leaders in this field, are opposed to the union shop, oppose the use of food stamps for strikers and would shackle collective bargaining through amendments to the National Labor Relations Act. It is imperative that the organized labor movement educate its members to the real menace of the Federal Election Commission's ruling. The scandals of the Nixon Administration where multi-millions of dollars, sometimes in cash, were given to political committees for suspect purposes—will be minimal as compared to the scandals that will emanate from the new license given to the corporations of our country.

Two members of the Commission, who dissented from the majority, stated: "Unions are presumably limited to communicating with and soliciting their members. Corporations, however, may solicit not only their stockholders but all employees, whether union members or not."

More than 1,000 participants in the first constitutional convention of the Coalition of Labor Unions, which was held in Detroit last year, voted decisively to keep CLUW a trade union organization.

Women from 48 states and the Districts. Corporate executives have stepped up their requests for political fund raising information from such organizations as the National Association of Manufacturers as well as the Federal Election Commission.

Local 30 President Named To Fill New AFL-CIO Post

Cynthia McCaughan, who has served as President of OPEIU Local 30 for more than 15 years, has been appointed by AFL-CIO President George Meany as Coordinator of the OPEIU's Activities in the Department of Civil Rights, effective with the beginning of 1976.

Her appointment as a staff assistant is a follow-up on the strong commitment to the rights of all workers, whether union or non-union, members, and they rest assured that the main goal of developing action programs within the framework of the labor movement in four key areas:
• To strengthen the role and participation of women within their unions and the trade union movement as a whole.
• To seek affirmative action in the workplace.
• To organize the millions of unorganized women workers.
• To encourage union women to play an active role in the legislative and political processes of their union and the nation.

Founded in March, 1974, CLUW now has 5,100 members in 47 chapters throughout the nation. The 12 CLUW regions are in the process of electing 15 regional vice presidents.

CLUW's newly adopted constitution sets up a national council of all CLUW members and a national executive board with proportional representation from unions, regions and chapters.

A CLUW membership dues increase of $10 was established with $1 going to a special travel expense account. This travel fund will defray the expenses of national executive board members who have no sources of reimbursement and thus increase participation in meetings and voting rates for retirees, who maintain union membership, was set at $5 per year.

Conn Health Center Yields 10% Pay Boost in Reopener

He says the new boost sets a starting salary of $6,145.88 in the lowest office grade, rising to a $7,153.38 maximum, and $11,445.20 in the top grade, rising to a $12,432.68 maximum per annum.
Executive Board Amends Strike Benefit Rules

(Continued from page 1)

eral atmosphere and human relations in the undertaking but also to an ultimate enhancement of pleasure in work." This is one thing to counter to the increasing constraints of organization and technique which characterize modern societies, and so gives workers a greater incentive to take an interest in their labor. This can lead to an increase in productivity, a more efficient organization of work, the application of more rational methods of management and, therefore, to an increase in the profitability of the economy, as the study notes. But wage earners can operate only within certain norms. It is not suitable for some forms of shift work or factory assemblers. Flexitime is often required to achieve the regular presence of fixed numbers of employees.

In some instances, flexitime can also cause internal difficulties of communications resulting in unused time, bottleneck problems, and perhaps employee disputes. Where there is a high rate of interdependence in job functions, the system can prove a drawback, extra expenditure can also be incurred by having to staff, heat and light premises for longer hours.

Still, the report adds, these difficulties apparently do not "constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of the system of flexitime working hours."

However, according to private estimates, more than 30% of all wage earners in Switzerland—where the system has spread like a prairie fire—are benefiting from flexitime.

Bay State Unit Wins 25½%

Wage gains totaling 25½% across-the-board in addition to fringe benefits improvements were gained by Local 269 in a new three-year contract negotiated for its office unit at Spalding Company, manufacturers of sports equipment in Chicopee, Mass., according to International Representative Justin F. Manning.

He said the new pact calls for a general wage increase of 7% in the first year, 8% in the second, and 7½% in the third year. The wage gains range from $32 per week to $68 over the life of the contract, and result in a $130 per week rate in the lowest grade to $275 in the top office classification.

Other improvements were made in the vacation schedule, the insurance program, coverage and the pension plan.

Assisting in the negotiations was a committee headed by Local 269 President John MacDonald, which included Gilbert LaValley, Mary White, Cathy Fedar and Jean Goyette.

Public Employee Unit Signs First Pact with N.J. Township

A two-year contract providing an 8% wage increase and defining work hours and other conditions for 150 employees, a new dental plan, has been concluded by Jersey City Local 142 for its new unit of public employees in Jersey Township, N.J., International Representative Gene Dwyer reports.

The initial pact, retroactive to January 1, 1974, has been approved by the Township Committee. The negotiations started in December, 1974, and continued throughout the year with meetings between representatives of the P.B.A., the OPEIU and the Public Blue Collar Workers.

Mrs. Alice Petrey, OPEIU Employee

Mrs. Alice Petrey, an OPEIU employee at the Washington, D.C. office for three years, was killed in an airplane crash with her husband on Christians Day while flying to Tennessee to visit relatives. They are survived by eight children to whom we extend our deepest sympathy in their tragic bereavement.

U.S. Price Index

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