Coughlin In Chicago:

SETS 100,000 TARGET AS MID-1977 GOAL

OPEIU Staff Urged to Step Up Organizing;
Offers Blueprint for New Growth

President Howard Coughlin urged OPEIU and Local full-time staff representatives meeting in Chicago to accelerate their organizing efforts so that the OPEIU can meet its minimum goal of 100,000 members by early 1977.

He told staffers from the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico to use this year's organizing targets and plans that were developed to provide better service and greater bargaining strength for the dispersed Canadian Locals and gain more visibility also for the OPEIU.

Director of Organization Art Lewandowski said U.S. Locals should adopt this idea, citing it as examples the Tennessee Valley Authority and Chicago Councils. Thus, Local Unions would be able to hire their own representatives who would assist their organizing efforts, he declared, adding: "Our whole motivation is to organize the unorganized, and this idea will help our organizing effort. If we are to grow, we have to think about forming councils. This could be the wave of the future for us. It's nothing to be afraid of and it's not an invasion of your Local's rights, so spend your money on it."

He also urged the Representatives to try to induce independent unions to affiliate with OPEIU because these unions "don't have the bargaining strength to deal with big companies; they're just getting what the companies feed them." He noted that it would be easier for OPEIU to bring about mergers of these independents rather than negotiate with them.

(Collapsed on page 3)

CLC Quits Councils Over Wage Freeze

Stepping up its campaign against wage controls in Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress has withdrawn from two major areas of cooperation with the federal government.

Its Executive Council voted to pull its representatives off two advisory bodies—the Economic Council of Canada which advises the government on economic policy, and the Canada Labour Relations Council on which labour, business and government leaders seek long-term solutions to labour-management relations.

CLC President Joseph Morris said its participation on the Canada Labour Relations Council was no longer relevant because of limitations placed on collective bargaining by the anti-inflation program. He said participation on the Economic Council of Canada had become an "embarrassment."

Medicare Now Covers Chronic Kidney Cases

A little known 1972 amendment in the law provides Medicare protection for people under age 65 with permanent kidney failure, says a new release from the Department of Health, Education & Welfare. It notes that 23,000 individuals across the nation with this condition are now receiving life-saving services under Medicare.

Declaring that there may still be some with this condition unaware of Medicare protection, perhaps even "members of your Union or members or their families," HEW asks OPEIU "cooperation in helping us to reach them."

It has prepared a pamphlet entitled: Medicare for People Under 65 with Permanent Kidney Failure for distribution to the general public. Local Union officials can obtain 100 copies or less by contacting their nearest Social Security office.
**Trends in U.S. Bargaining**

Negotiated wage adjustments in the first year of major contracts in the private sector averaged 9.8% in 1974 and 10.2% in 1975. Contracts with cost-of-living clauses netted an average 12.3% in their first year in 1975. Those without cost-of-living clauses averaged 9.1%.

These trends in collective bargaining are noted in an article in the *American Federationist*, reviewing AFL-CIO contract settlements last year. It adds that “during 1976 negotiations, unions of all sizes will continue to secure improvements on the bargaining gains reported in 1975.”

Unions, said the AFL-CIO publication, also continued the long-standing battle against fixed caps or ceilings on combined pension and social security benefits, while vesting rights to accumulate pension benefits were expanded in 1975 by using sick leave to cover maternity absence.

The concern with job security and income maintenance provisions reflected in severance pay clauses, supplemental unemployment benefits (SUB) insurance benefits being paid for laid-off workers, and retraining programs.

A shorter workweek, longer vacations for fewer years of service, and other new benefits, were found throughout last year’s contracts. The trend also continued toward vacation bonuses, plant shutdowns between Christmas and New Year’s, and “personal choice” holidays.

The Administration, says the article, is currently projecting a 6.3% increase in prices in 1976; 6% in 1977, and 5.9% in 1978. But since Administration economists have been overly optimistic in past forecasts, the actual increase in living costs may be somewhat higher.

All OPEIU contract negotiators should keep these factors in mind this year.

**Situation in Canada**

Because of wage controls in Canada, free collective bargaining has been “placed in a deep freeze” and discussion of fringe benefits desired by employees has been made “ill-advised in many ways,” according to Canadian Labour Congress Executive Vice President Shirley Carr.

Speaking in Montreal, she predicted that unions will negotiate the suspension of cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment clauses during the control period and load the front end of contracts in order to get the full benefit of negotiated increases.

The CLC officer said the Congress is advising its affiliates to bargain in excess of the guidelines on all issues and to have the negotiated terms of settlement remain a part of the collective agreement even though it is rolled back by the Anti-Inflation Board or the Administration.

“When the guidelines are ended or relaxed, then the full negotiated settlement must be honored,” she pointed out.

Although fringe benefit bargaining is in a state of suspension under the controls, the CLC officer outlined a number of issues to look for in future collective bargaining, the negotiation of flexible hours of work, flexible retirement, financial and income-tax preparation, paid personal leave, fully-paid maternity leave, unemployment insurance, dental insurance, and personal leave where the entire “non-productive” hours would be lumped together in continuous leave.

This would include such items as vacation and statutory holidays, or less days, in larger contracts, or the rounding up of all personal and physical fitness classes, educational leave—upgrading and adult education, and classes that say employees who have been suspended, penalized or the like, are innocent until proven guilty and that they shall remain on the payroll until completion of justicification through the grievance procedure.

The CLC officer also emphasized that a matter of continuing importance at the bargaining table will be union participation in decision-making or questions of company policy regarding recruitment, dismissal and lay-offs.

The Canadian labour movement, obviously, is planning for far more liberal union contracts when the wage-freeze ends.
OPEIU Staff Members in Chicago Pose for Picture

Sets 100,000 Target
As Mid-1977 Goal

(Continued from page 1)

than to compete with them, because such mergers would be mutually advantageous.

Discussing organizing techniques, International Representative Jay Porcaro said leaflet- ing is highly important when properly handled. He said every leaflet should be timely, contain only one major issue, should not only indicate the problem, but also present a solution as well.

He said organizers should use leaflets "to stay on the offensive," should avoid responding to employer charges, and should be "sincere, clear, and timely," adding: "The best way to deal with resistance is to anticipate it, and proper leafleting can benefit a campaign immeasurably."

Coughlin said future OPEIU organizing literature should be geared to employees who have been victims of sex and age "discrimination," particularly those denied benefits under the new Employee Retirement Income Security Act. He indicated that 5,000 employers terminated their pension plans because "they didn't want to participate in ERISA." He said OPEIU plans to make them "targets" of future organizing drives, stressing that the companies have exploited their employees by denying them pension benefits.

Urges Closer Contact With Membership

The need for greater communication between OPEIU leadership and membership was discussed by President Coughlin, noting that several Locals have difficulty getting members to attend meetings because of fear of crime. He suggested that Locals change their constitutions to provide for more shop meetings and fewer membership meetings.

He also suggested that full- time representatives make more visits to union shops than in the past, pointing out that the trade union movement was founded on the basis of more contact with the members.

Changing Labor Law Puts Onus on Unions

OPEIU General Counsel Joe Finley reviewed new trends in labor law. He said that in the past, most of his time was spent in appearances before the NLRB but the emphasis now in labor law is on arbitration. Board policy stating that disputes involving labor contracts with arbitration clauses be resolved by arbitration and not by the Board. Discussing the "duty of fair representation," he cited several recent NLRB and federal court decisions holding that the union, as well as the employer, may be held liable for damages to a grievant if the union does not thoroughly investigate the grievant's case, or does not adequately defend him.

He pointed out that this doctrine has become "an overpowering force in union matters," and every union must now be aware of the issues involved in this doctrine to avoid liability.

He referred to this as another example of "consumerism in the law," and said unions can avoid liability under this doctrine by providing closer contact between union representatives and employees. What is important, he stressed, is that the union "must act reasonably and in good faith at all times; must not process grievances in a per- functory fashion" or it will lose itself open to liability.

The representatives saw a film entitled: "The Truth of the Matter," distributed by The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., dealing with the preparation of witnesses for testifying credibly at arbitration hearings. It was announced that the Interna- tional plans to purchase the film and distribute it for showing to local unions free of charge, except for postage.

International Representative Justin F. Manning then discussed the manner of testifying at arbitration hearings. He said a witness should be prepared at least 60 minutes for every ten minutes of cross examination on the witness stand. He added that preparing for ar- bitration is very much like preparing for a speech or organizing employees.

"If we can persuade people to sign a union designation card, we can persuade an ar- bitrator to decide in our favor," he declared.

Flexible Halted at Senate Hearing

Solos Told "Nobody Loses, Everybody Wins"

Coughlin reported that OPEIU's Strike Benefit Fund provided $1 million in benefits in 1975-76 because of several major strikes. He said the fund is somewhat depleted and some benefits to striking mem- bers had to be curtailed but "will resume when the fund reaches $200,000." He urged Local Unions to develop alternatives to prolonged strikes. He suggested "hit-and-run" strikes, in which employees strike one day and work the next. He said this is "possible in organizations deal- ing with the public, such as banks," adding that picketing before and after work and dur- ing lunch, while working office hours "may be a good substi- tute for the strike." He noted this was embarrassing to employers.

He also suggested that Local Unions should use the Ameri- can Arbitration Association's expedited procedure wherever possible, or else "the company can arbitrate you out of busi- ness." This procedure is less expensive, where the employer agrees, because it dispenses with transcripts and briefs, and the arbiter can decide the dispute without writing an opinion, he said.

Strike preparation and strategy were discussed by Regional Director Bill Adams who urged staff representatives to get "more involved in strikes to en- sure their success," by stopping people from crossing the picket line. Adams noted that a strike requires much strategy and planning, and "you have to make sure it's the way to bring the employer to terms."

Lowe Stresses Need to Push VOTE Drive

OPEIU Sec.-Treas. William A. Lowe described the VOTE program in 1975 as "anything but a success," disclosing that funds collected by the Voice of the Electorate were dis- pointing and not up to expecta- tions.

Noting that 1976 is an im- portant election year, Lowe stressed the importance of rais- ing funds through VOTE this year to help elect pro-labor candidates to Congress. This could insure passage of several key labor-sponsored programs, such as the jobs bill, and abolition of Sec. 14(b) of the Taft- Hartley Act which allows states to outlaw closed shops.

During this year's drive, all OPEIU members in the U.S. are being urged to contribute at least $2 each to the VOTE fund-raising drive.

Discuss New Ways
to Cut Long Strikes

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Flexible work hours get an enthusiastic review from three companies in hearings by a Sen- ate committee studying chang- ing patterns of work.

National Casualty Life Insurance of Milwaukee, whose employees are represented by OPEIU Local 500, claims "no-body loses, everybody wins," in its 2 1/4-year experiment with variable working hours agreed on in its last contract negotia- tions which specified that em- ployees can show up between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and must work 7 1/2 hours.

"Half of our people are at work before 7:30 a.m.,” a Northwestern official told the committee, adding that the plan makes recruiting easier, reduces traffic congestion and improves services.

AC Control Data official said 77% of its 25,000 employees are taking advantage of flexible hours. He said the plan "positively influences the employee's quality of life without any loss in productivity.

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Why Unions Are Needed!

Those who feel that unions are not needed because companies no longer exploit workers would be jolted out of their complacency after reading employee protests to stockholders of the J. P. Stevens Company at their recent annual meeting in midtown New York. The company, which has flagrantly violated the law time and time again, has been found guilty of unfair labor practices in 15 separate cases in the past 13 years. National Labor Relations Board rulings against the company have been upheld 11 times in the higher courts, including three in the U.S. Supreme Court. Just a few days before the annual stockholders’ meeting the NLRB urged the U.S. Court of Appeals to find Stevens in contempt for ignoring previous court orders to stop intimidating and coercing its workers. Those rulings came from the organizing efforts of the Textile Workers of America at the Stevens plants in Wallace, North Carolina.

Amazing Stories of Discrimination

Those who think that Stevens-only discriminated against union workers would be amazed at some of the stories brought to the attention of the stockholders. One plant worker who spoke was Mildred Whitney. She worked for the company for 26 years and had one year’s juniority when she was fired last year after undergoing major surgery which left her unable to perform her former heavy work. The company claimed it had no lighter work for her and fined her $2 for being late for the protest pension that the union paid her for an extension of sick leave. She received a lump-sum retirement benefit of $1,360, and nothing else after 26 years on the job.

Among other former workers who spoke at the stockholders’ meeting was Thelma Malone, employed by Stevens for 37 years, with the exception of the time she spent in World War II. Harmed by breathing difficulties which were probably caused by long service in inadequately ventilated fabric mills, Malone was forced to retire in 1973. He received as his total retirement benefit one lump-sum payment of $1,310 and a plaque thanking him for dedicated service. The Textile Workers Union has moved to get Malone additional compensation because his brown lung disease was probably company service-connected.

Managements Tactics Explored

Two formal proposals presented to the stockholders called for a study of the costs of Stevens’ long dispute with the union and a separate study of inequities suffered by plant workers. Prior to the meeting, the company had mailed a notice to all stockholders condemning these proposals as, “inflammatory” and requested a “no” vote. Despite management’s request, holders of more than 800,000 shares of stock in the Stevens Company supported the proposals. For the first time in the history of the company, its labor relations was on the agenda of a stockholders’ meeting and it was possible to see some enlightened discussion of management tactics.

We have always held that the penalties of the National Labor Relations Act are inadequate. Here we have a case of obvious exploitation of workers and numerous illegal acts on the part of J. P. Stevens management. Still this company which has been forced to pay awards to workers of more than $1.3 million for unjust firings and other abuses, is allowed to continue its anti-union campaign. Only last year, Stevens made a $50,000 out-of-court settlement to avoid a court trial on union charges of wire-tapping and other spying activities against the union and company employees.

Government Must Solve Problem

Collective bargaining with this type of management can never be achieved in the face of such illegal acts. While the AFL-CIO is preparing to launch an economic boycott against the J. P. Stevens Company, such action should not be necessary because of its obvious law-breaking record. If the government cannot find ways of sufficiently penalizing a company which has had numerous contempt citations handed down against it for ignoring court orders and continued violations of federal labor laws, how can solutions be found for the complex labor-management problems of our economy?

Thus, the government must see unions to bargain collectively with employers like the J. P. Stevens Company and others which show little or no concern whatsoever with the lives and well-being of their workers.

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Labor Offers Remedies for NLRB
Asks Congress for More Teeth in Labor Law

The National Labor Relations Act is being frustrated by predatory delays that serve employer interests, union witnesses testified at a House hearing in Washington, D.C., on proposals by organized labor for Congressional action to remedy shortcomings in the law and its administration.

Other union leaders are scheduled to testify later in the hearings being held by a House Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations, headed by Rep. Frank Thompson, Jr. (D-NJ).

Among remedies urged on Congress are amendments to the NLRA which would:

• Impose severe penalties on employers for violations, including heavy fines and jail to make it no longer profitable for them to thumb their noses at the law.

• Disqualify employers who deliberately violate the act from receiving business orders from the government.

• Require the NLRB to seek injunctions against unfair labor tactics by employers who persistently violate the law.

• Empower the NLRB to require a company to bargain with a union that has been prevented from gaining a majority by persistent unfair labor practices.

Union witnesses pointed out examples of how employers can drag out for more than a year certification of a bargaining unit, after an election has been held for it, by filing objections, calling for repeated hearings, and then asking for more time to file exceptions.

"No union or group of employees can afford to participate in such a lengthy process," one witness declared. "It becomes too expensive in terms of foregone wages and benefits. For every day that representation is postponed, the worker is financially penalized. On the other hand, the employer benefits from the delay because his labor costs are frozen and he can, through delaying tactics, make the cost of organizing prohibitive.

Fighting Canada’s Wage Controls

CLC WHY-ME? SHIRTS are selling like hotcakes as union members ask what happened to price controls. The ones shown above are modelled by OPEIU members June Cassey (left) and Julie Gorman, both active in CLC campaign workers. The shirts are available from the Canadian Labour Congress, 2841 Riverside Dr., Ottawa, Ont., at cost $3.00 single; $2.75, ten or more.

Women Study Job Problems

Solutions to problems faced by working women were explored at a recent one-day seminar at the AFL-CIO Labor Studies Center in Silver Spring, Md., sponsored by the Committee of Salaried and Professional Women of the Council of AFL-CIO for Professional Employees (CPE), and the Federation of Organizations for Professional Women (FOPW).

Conference theme was "Barriers Facing Women Today," which focused on four occupational areas—media, educational, clerical and service—and the problems of each. What resulted from the meeting was the recognition of certain problems common to all working women.

The conference prescribed action in six areas; equal pay, career advancement, the stereotyped image of the working woman, involvement in policy making, unemployment, and more information on women in the labor force.

Give a New $2 Bill to VOTE!

The $2 bill is back in circulation after a lapse of 10 years. U.S. Treasurer Francine I. Neff has asked the cooperation of newspaper publishers in publicizing the fact, and suggesting to readers ways they can utilize the $2 bill. Why not contribute the first $2 bill you get to VOTE (Voice of the Electorate), to help elect friends of labor to public office in November?

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Canadian Price Index

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