



WHITE COLLAR

Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO and CLC

No. 362

FEBRUARY, 1977



from the desk
of the

PRESIDENT

Misguided Class Action Suits

When Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was being considered, the AFL-CIO and all of its International Unions, including the OPEIU, fully supported its aims. The AFL-CIO and the OPEIU felt that all minorities were entitled to a fair shake in the work place and that discrimination in employment must be eliminated.

The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 eliminated the last vestige of any union voice in the hiring of workers. This Act not only prohibited unions from including in collective bargaining agreements the provision that workers must be members of a union before being hired, but also eliminated the referral system including those who were not members of unions.

In supporting the Equal Employment Opportunities Act, known as Title VII, the AFL-CIO in effect joined with the government in compelling employers to hire on a non-discriminatory basis. This Act was passed over employer opposition.

International unions, including our own, were shocked to find that class action suits brought by blacks, Hispanics and women in most cases include all of the unions having a collective bargaining relationship with the firm involved despite the fact that these unions, including ours, have no voice whatsoever in the selection of new hires.

Numerous lawyers instituting such suits have persuaded minority workers to name all of the unions in a particular company in order to widen the possibility of success insofar as targets are concerned in the courts. Employers have done nothing whatsoever to discourage the naming of unions in such class actions. In fact, the reverse is true. Employers have secretly encouraged workers to include unions in such suits.

The Office & Professional Employees International Union has been named in such class actions when, as pointed out above, we have nothing whatsoever to do with hiring by employers, and workers become members of the OPEIU only after working 31 days after hire by the employer.

In one case in a paper company in the South, we have been named in a class action suit along with the employer and every other union in the plant by a janitor, who has never been a member of the union and was never included by the National Labor Relations Board in our collective bargaining unit.

While we realize that these suits are encouraged by so-called "liberal" lawyers, some of whom are supposed to be friends of labor, it is imperative that we use counsel to answer these actions and appear in court on our behalf. Needless to say, these actions are nuisances and expensive. The burden of discrimination against women and minorities in the labor force rightfully belongs on the backs of those responsible for it—the employers.

In addition, we are now faced with threats to our seniority system in lay-offs. With the economic picture as dreary as it is, our collective bargaining units throughout the United States have been reduced in hundreds of instances. Our contracts, like those of other unions, call for lay-offs to be made in accordance with seniority. In effect, therefore, the last hired is the first to be laid off.

When rehiring takes place, as the company's economic picture brightens, the last laid off is the first to be rehired. This seniority practice has been in effect for 76 years in the United States, even long before the Wagner Act. It has been considered, and rightly so, to be the only fair way of handling lay-offs as a result of an economic downturn.

The seniority system was introduced in 1900 by the Railroad and Typographical Unions. It was recognized as the fairest yardstick to determine who is to go from the graveyard shift to the day shift; who is to get the choicest vacation period; who is to be

(Continued on Page 4)

SEVEN MIDWEST LOCALS SET UP NEW COUNCIL

Delegates from seven OPEIU Locals in the North Central Region voted unanimously to join together to form a new OPEIU Council at a meeting in early January at the Red Carpet Inn in Milwaukee, Wisc. They also agreed to hire a Representative for the new Council.

A further meeting was scheduled to draw up a Constitution for the Council, to give it a name, elect officers, and make arrangements so that it can begin functioning before April 1. The meeting expressed the hope that other OPEIU Locals in the Region will shortly join the new grouping.

Thirty-five delegates represented the following Locals from a three-state area:

- Local 12 (Twin Cities)—St. Paul-Minneapolis, Minn.
- Local 39, Madison, Wisc.
- Local 44, La Crosse, Wisc.
- Local 158, Aurora, Ill.
- Local 311, Kankakee, Ill.
- Local 336, Kenosha, Wisc.
- Local 391, Chicago, Ill.

The meeting was chaired by Vice President Bill Adams, and was attended by Vice President H. R. Markusen and International Representative Mike Walker. Director of Organiza-

tion Art Lewandowski was the guest speaker.

He told the group that formation of Councils is the key to new organizing if the OPEIU is to reach the masses of the unorganized, presently beyond the scope of Locals which lack the resources individually to exploit fully new organizing leads.

Moreover, he said, Councils will enable the OPEIU to give greater service and representation to members in each individual Local through providing more paid staff to assist them in collective bargaining. In addition, pooling their resources for this purpose will give added economic protection to each member because it is a wise investment for the future.

He emphasized that companies which are now unionized and paying union scales are at a competitive disadvantage with those in the same industry in an area who remain non-union and pay lower wages and fringe benefits. As a result, he said, unionized companies are placed at a competitive disadvantage so that more emphasis must now be put on organizing the unorganized to balance the scales for the benefit of all, par-

ticularly OPEIU members whose pay scales and fringe benefits must be protected from the unfair competition of non-union companies.

He said the Council concept had been successfully tested by our Canadian Locals, especially in new organizing. It represents a new approach now to our Locals in the U.S. for organizing the unorganized in the white collar field.

He concluded by expressing the hope that all OPEIU Locals throughout the nation will be quick to follow the example of the seven pioneer Locals in the North Central Region.

The delegates regarded the Council concept with enthusiasm, and looked forward to it as "providing a great vehicle for new organizing in the area," as well as promising better service and representation for members in their own Locals.

They invited other OPEIU Locals in the area to join the new Council, feeling that as it expands its scope it may be possible in the near future to hire an additional Representative for its staff, thereby doubling its capacity for growth and service to all members in the region.

OPEIU Wins Dispute on Stewards NLRB Rules They Enjoy Super-Seniority in Layoffs

The National Labor Relations Board has ruled that a union steward can exercise super-seniority in the event of lay-off over all other employees even with greater seniority, a decision of significance to all union stewards across the nation.

The ruling was handed down in the case of Elaine Siciliano, a Hospital Service Plan (Blue Cross-Blue Shield) of New Jersey senior accountant who filed unfair labor practice charges against her employer and OPEIU Local 32 in Newark, N.J., which represents the health agency's 1,000 office employees.

She charged that she was unfairly bumped laterally to a lower grade by Hansel Anglin, a union steward and also an accountant in her grade whose position was deleted and who then exercised a clause in the union contract providing super-seniority for stewards in the event of layoffs.

In a decision on her case last May, Administrative Law Judge Melvin J. Welles decided in her favor, holding that the super-

seniority clause in the OPEIU contract was "unlawful." Both the OPEIU and her employer appealed the decision to the board in Washington, D.C.

A three-member panel, comprising Chairman Betty Southard Murphy and members John A. Penello and John H. Manning, unanimously overturned the Law Judge's ruling and dismissed the case in its entirety.

"If, as the Administrative Law Judge found, super-senior-

ity for stewards does not permit lateral bumping, then it means nothing at all," the panel declared. "The use of super-seniority to protect a steward's grade level and position in the event of involuntary job change furthers the statutory purpose of protecting employees' statutory Section 7 rights by insuring that a steward be kept on the job at all times and not be subject to the contingency of threat of layoff."

26 to 35% Wage Gains Won at Insurance Firm

Across-the-board wage gains totaling 22%, plus another 4% provided each year on the employee's birthday, were won in a new three-year contract renegotiated by Local 27 for its 900-member unit at American National Insurance Company in Galveston, Texas, International Bill Kirby reports.

It calls for a 10% increase effective last October 10, another 7% on October 9, 1977, and 5% on October 8, 1978. Rates in pay grades one through four and the top grade M-1, are increased by 14% in the first year, 12% in the second, and 9% in the third year so that "turnover problems may be reduced by a higher scale."

Monthly salaries for Grade 1 employees are increased to a minimum starting rate of \$517.18.

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC

HOWARD COUGHLIN
President

WILLIAM A. LOWE
Secretary-Treasurer

POSTMASTERS, ATTENTION—Change of address Form 3579 should be addressed to: Office and Professional Employees International Union, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Published monthly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 815 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

Reproduction by the Labor Press of any or all material herein contained is not only permitted, but wholly desirable in the interest of workers' education.

Subscription Price \$1 a Year

Tide Rising Against 14(b)

Dr. Ray F. Marshall, the new Secretary of Labor, told reporters that he supports affirmative action programs to expand job opportunities for minorities and favors repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which permits states to outlaw union shop agreements.

He indicated that he "probably" would have supported the construction site picketing and bargaining legislation, shaped under the guidance of former Secretary of Labor John P. Dunlap, but vetoed by former President Ford.

Marshall disclaimed expertise in the area, but said he saw site picketing rights as part of an "overall effort" to improve labor-management relations in the construction industry.

The new Secretary of Labor has had a long and distinguished career in the academic world as a labor economist whose views are liberal, informed and sensible. A former University of Texas professor and manpower expert, he has worked closely with the trade union movement to provide jobs for the underprivileged.

In addition to his teaching duties, he served as a director of the Center for Study of Human Resources, chairman of the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship, and president of the National Rural Center. He is also president-elect of the prestigious Industrial Relations Research Association.

In an interview at Plains, Ga., he told reporters that the government should provide useful jobs when persons "willing and able to work" can't find employment in the private sector.

In his new post, he can count on the full support of organized labor and union members in efforts to achieve "full employment, full production, and a balanced economy."

His support for repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, of course, is a bitter pill for the so-called National Right to Work Committee to swallow. (See letters on subject on this Page and stories on Pages 3 and 5.)

The J. P. Stevens Boycott

More than any other company in American industry, J. P. Stevens is the symbol of anti-unionism, anti-workerism in American life. The entire labor movement, including the OPEIU, has joined in an unrelenting nationwide boycott of J. P. Stevens products, as the only weapon left.

These Are Some of the Products That J. P. Stevens Makes

SHEETS & PILLOWCASES Beauticals Beauti-Blend Fine Arts Peanuts (comic strip figure) Tastemaker Utica Utica & Mohawk	DRAPERIES J. P. Stevens	TABLE LINEN Simtex
BLANKETS Baby Stevens Forstmann Utica	HOSIERY Big Mama Finesse Fruit of the Loom Hip-Lets Spirit	COTTON FABRICS Academy Lady Twist Twill Twist Twill
CARPETS Contender Gulistan Merryweather Tastemaker	TOWELS Fine Arts Tastemaker Utica	SYNTHETICS & BLEND FABRICS Blentempo Coachman Consort Carousel Gesture Stevetex 20 Below Lady Consort Windshear Linebacker Weltamatic (cotton-nylon knit)
SLIPPERS (washable) Always in Step	WOOLENS & WORSTED FABRICS Boldeena Forstmann Hockanum Worumba	

We urge all OPEIU members when shopping for any textile products to make sure they do not purchase any of the brands listed above, and to inform the salesperson why.

IBEW Reader Hails RTW Column

Says 14(b) Repeal Will Be "Great Day for America"

The following comment on President Coughlin's December column was received from Fred H. Powers, a member of Local 437 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) in Des Moines, Iowa.

"Dear Sir & Brother:
"With reference to your very good article in the December 1976 White Collar, you missed one very important factor affecting members of a collective bargaining unit of employees.

"Under the 'Right to Work for Less' regulations, contrary to the concept of rule by majority—the fundamental principle of the U.S. Government—an employee may choose to disregard all contractual conditions of employment and there's nothing the union may do about it.

"A parallel would be that should a person not be agreeable to the provisions of a city ordinance, or any public law, he could hold that it was not his desire to abide by the rules affecting all others.

"A union member assessed a fine for violations of union laws or agreements, by virtue of 'right to work for less,' may thumb the proverbial nose, go merrily on his way and continue to disregard all rules and contractual provisions of employment.

"In addition, irrespective of

the morality of a fellow-employee, an employer is privileged to force the close association of his employees with unsavory characters, and those deemed to be unfit for union membership.

"Personally, having been a full-time union representative for twenty-two years, I have found nothing good about that misnomer, 'right to work.' On the other hand, it has proved

to be costly to both employers and employees.

"It will be a great day for America and for all workers—both union and non-union—when Jimmy Carter signs the bill nullifying Section 14(b).

"With best wishes for the New Year, I am

"Fraternally
(signed) Fred. H. Powers."
January 5, 1977

"Best personal regards,"

RTW's P.R. Man's Reaction; A Circular Letter to Editors

President Coughlin's column in the December White Collar seemingly has created hysteria at the so-called Right-to-Work Committee's Washington, D.C., headquarters in Fairfax, Va. We are indebted to a nationally-known newspaper and radio commentator who has forwarded to us a copy of a letter received by him from Herb Berkowitz, RTW Director of Public Relations, which apparently was circularized to all opinion makers in the mass media. It says:
"Dear Editor:

"Are union officials really going to mount a major campaign in the 95th Congress to wipe out Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, authorizing state Right to Work laws, or is

this just a National Right to Work Committee trick to draw attention to itself?

"Howard Coughlin, president of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, has been kind enough to answer this for us. Writes Coughlin in the December issue of his union's newspaper, White Collar, 'While President-elect Carter is facing Herculean tasks of combatting unemployment and inflation, and these problems should be given high priority, we cannot allow too much time to pass before tackling the subject of repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.'

"We'll let Coughlin's words speak for themselves."

Lowe Launches VOTE "President's 100 Club"

Initiating the new approach to fund-raising for VOTE recommended by the Executive Board at its December meeting, Sec.-Treas. William A. Lowe has circularized all OPEIU International Officers, International Representatives, and full-time Representatives of Local Unions to join the "President's 100 Club" by giving \$100 each. He wrote:

"It is hoped to have 100% representation in the "President's 100 Club." Those who meet this quota will receive recognition in the form of gold VOTE membership cards and the names of such contributors will be appropriately published in the White Collar.

"Of course, we all realize the important point is not the award of a gold card, or other material form of recognition, but rather the fact that contributions to VOTE are used to elect those persons and promote legislation that will benefit our members and their families.

"In order to enroll in the "President's 100 Club" you may either send us a \$100 check or you may authorize us to make payroll deductions by completing and returning the enclosed check-off authorization card.

"The Executive Board urges every OPEIU member to participate in this program at the earliest opportunity."

Check-Off Authorization Form

I voluntarily request and authorize my employer, Office and Professional Employees International Union, to deduct \$10.00 per month for 10 months from my salary checks, a total of \$100.00, as my annual enrollment fee in the OPEIU "President's 100 Club."

This authorization to be effective as of and shall continue in effect from year to year thereafter, or until such time as such authorization is revoked in writing.

Signed

Dated

Medicare Premiums Face Another 50¢ Boost in July

Some 25.4 million Medicare beneficiaries will be charged an additional 50¢ a month premium beginning next July for supplementary medical insurance, says the Social Security Administration.

The new monthly premium increase to \$7.70 will cost the nation's elderly and disabled about \$152.4 million for the optional coverage of doctor bills and other medical expenses for 12 months.

Out-of-pocket expenditures for Medicare hospital insurance, an automatic benefit when a person begins receiving Social Security checks, were increased 19% on January 1, it was an-

nounced earlier.

The increase in hospital insurance means that an elderly or disabled person entering a hospital in 1977 pays the first \$124 of the initial bill covering up to two months, compared with the previous charge of \$104.

The need for the increase was said to be rising doctor fees, a trend toward more expensive medical services, and increased cost and use of hospital outpatient services.

Spread the Word!
Tell your friends not to buy J. P. Stevens products.

Reasons Why Congress Should Repeal Section 14(b)

Current figures compiled by the AFL-CIO show once again the economic effects of the so-called "right-to-work" (for less) laws on the wages of working Americans.

The legislation, section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, forbids workers and their employers freely to negotiate union shop clauses in their contracts.

As a result, unions in those 20 states having such laws are hampered by "free-loaders" who take advantage of union negotiated wages and benefits while refusing to shoulder their fair share of the responsibility.

With weakened employee organizations, business and industry are relatively free to impose their own concepts of fair wages and working conditions upon their employees.

Thus, it's no accident that workers in those states earn less, and labor in less desirable circumstances than their counterparts elsewhere.

For the entire United States, the per capita personal income is \$5,902 per year. In the "right-to-work" (for less) states that figure is \$5,329. But in those states without this legislation, the per capita income is

\$6,145.

Further, the average weekly wage in "right-to-work" (for less) states is only \$169.02 while workers in the "free states" can expect an average of \$195.97 — a difference of \$26.95 per week for 52 weeks a year.

Workers in Ohio, a "free state," earn an average weekly pay check of \$223.67. Virginians, on the other hand, can expect an average weekly wage of only \$156.41, a big difference.

Tragically, such differences are compounded with each year

that passes under that regressive legislation. When Alabama passed its "right-to-work" (for less) law in 1953, it was \$680 below the national average in per capita income. By 1975, it had fallen \$1,258 below that average—a loss of \$579 in relation to the national average.

North Carolina adopted similar legislation in 1947, when the state was \$457 below the average. In 1975, the state had dropped to \$850 below the average—a loss of \$493. The average weekly wage in North Carolina in 1975 was a meager \$135.14.

Mississippi adopted such leg-

islation in 1954 when average weekly earnings were \$877 below the national average. Here again, that state's workers now have fallen even further behind. In 1975, Mississippi was \$1,850 below the average, a wage erosion of an additional \$973.

The same dismal tale can be told for most of the other "right-to-work" (for less) states. Nevada is the only RTW state that has consistently remained above the average per capita income.

Clearly, the time to repeal Section 14(b) by the new Congress has now come.

Finnish Labor Leader Visits OPEIU Says 93% of His Nation's Bank Employees Are Unionized

Kari O. Virtanen, international secretary of the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees from Helsinki, Finland, was a recent distinguished visitor to OPEIU international headquarters where he was welcomed by President Howard Coughlin and Director of Organization Art Lewandowski.

Visiting the U.S. under the State Department's exchange program to study white-collar unionism here, the 32-year-old Finnish labor official has written several books and now plans one on the world labor movement. Before visiting the OPEIU he had called at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.

During an exchange of views with OPEIU officials on the problem of unionizing white-collar workers in this country, Mr. Virtanen expressed surprise that only about 20% of U.S. workers belong to unions, lagging far behind the proportion in West European countries.

Bank Employees 93% Union

Although Finland has a population of only 4½-million, 70% of the work force is unionized in the blue and white collar categories with bank employees the most high unionized of all salaried employees he disclosed, adding:

"We have 30,000 bank employees in Finland and more than 28,000 belong to the union. About 70% of the bank employees are women and 93% are union members," he said. He was amazed to learn that of the one-million bank employees in the U.S. only a few thousand were unionized, although he predicted that "eventually you'll succeed in unionizing them."

He explained that in Finland because the vast majority belong to unions, newly hired bank employees present no difficulty. Banks must notify the union about new hires, he said, so a union representative calls at the bank and meets with them in a private room provided at most banks.

The advantages of union membership are explained and then a question-and-answer period follows, so there's "little

difficulty encountered." Sometimes hard-shelled bankers don't provide a private room but in such cases the union rents a room nearby, he disclosed.

Women bank employees with children know that they gained on-premises day care facilities only through collective bargaining so they realize what unionism means. Finnish banks pay for these day-care centers and their staffs, he said.

Mr. Virtanen disclosed that unions deal in negotiations only with wages and working conditions but vacations, holidays, health-welfare and pensions are prescribed by national laws which the combined unions, through their political power, have had enacted.

He said that the average Finnish bank employee now earns about \$125 per week although he noted prices here are about equal to those over there. On pensions, he said that the law requires all employers to pay an amount for each employee into a national pension fund that will provide 60% of normal salary on retirement.

Finland's Pension System

There is also Social Security to supplement pensions but payments are rather small, he explained. However, for those in the higher salary brackets the Social Security payment, plus pension, enables a retiree to get

from 75% to 80% of his normal earnings on retirement, and for those in the lower brackets up to 90%. The Finnish labor movement is now pressing for a change in the law that will give lower income earners retirement payments equal to the weekly minimum wage, he added.

A national health-welfare plan covers all workers for surgical hospital expenses, and each individual is required to pay only a small amount. Asked how large, he said: "If I had to be hospitalized when I return to Finland the entire cost to me would be only \$1 a day." He disclosed that the health-welfare plan did not cover dental costs for adults, which are "very expensive," although there is "free dental care for all children under 18."

Mr. Virtanen revealed that a Finnish law enacted under union pressure now makes the teaching of a course on unionism compulsory in all vocational schools, and there is a movement to make this course compulsory also in primary and secondary schools as an integral part of the educational system.

The Finnish labor official has traveled in all West European countries (except Albania), interviewing trade union leaders. His travels also have included Mexico, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

U.S. Supreme Court to Hear Case on Strikers' Welfare

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to consider a case that raises a controversial issue of whether strikers are entitled to welfare benefits.

But the Justices didn't commit themselves to a decision on what employers contend is the basic issue: Whether such tax-supported benefits for one side in a labor dispute violate the government's obligation to remain neutral under national labor policy.

The Justices will review a lower court decision that invalidated a Maryland regulation

denying welfare aid to children whose fathers are unemployed because of a strike, misconduct or voluntarily quitting a job. The lower court also struck down a federal regulation that allowed individual states the discretion to deny benefits in such cases.

But the court didn't say if it will consider a companion case brought by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that raises the labor policy question. Thus, the Justices could merely decide whether the federal regulation can allow state discrimination and avoid any ruling in this case on the more political issue.

Harris Poll Shows Unions Enjoy Wide Public Esteem

A recent Harris nationwide survey shows that by an astounding margin of 85-to-7 percent the public feels that "in many industries, Unions are needed so the legitimate grievances and complaints of workers can be heard and action taken on them."

• A near unanimous 96% of those polled believe Unions were started "because workers were being exploited by low wages, long hours and bad working conditions."

• By a margin of 80-to-7 percent, the public believes "Unions are as much a part of our democratic system as private companies, consumers groups, farm groups, and other organized parts of American society."

• By a 76-to-10 percent margin, the public feels "most unions in the U.S. have been good forces, working for such things as national health insur-

ance, higher unemployment compensation, better Social Security, minimum wage laws and other desirable social needs."

• By margins of better than 2-to-1, a majority feels "most employers would quickly move to exploit" them if no Union were present, and "most Unions stand for helping less-privileged people get a better break."

The Harris Survey also revealed majorities of the public have some negative feelings about "many Union leaders" because of "abuse of their power" or "known ties with racketeers and organized crime" (even though less than a fraction of one percent have ever been accused of such charges).

These feelings, no doubt, are nurtured by sensationalist news accounts any time some ranking official is accused of wrongdoing. This viewpoint always gets preferred treatment in the mass media.

Lucky Stores Unit Wins \$6.10 Hourly Average

Wage boosts ranging from 35¢ to 73¢ an hour in the first year, with most receiving a 56¢ increase bringing the average pay to \$6.10 an hour, and 7% across-the-board in each following year, highlight a new three-year contract renegotiated by Oakland Local 29 for its 225-member clerical unit at Lucky Stores in San Leandro, Calif.

Business Representative Alice Bartley reports that a COLA providing one cent for each average 0.45 rise in the 1967 CPI for the San Francisco area is continued.

An 11th holiday (floating) was also gained, with a revised vacation schedule calling for four weeks after nine years (was 10); five after 13 (was 15), and a sixth week after 20 years.

Employer pension contributions will go to 40¢ an hour in the first year (was 35¢), and 50¢ in 1978. The health-welfare plan was improved in the dental section. Shift differentials will increase by five cents per hour each year, rising to a 50¢ total. Employees also

will receive pay for up to six days of unused sick leave per year.

Other improvements are a provision for a check-off of union dues; requirement that the company hire temporary employees from among union members, stronger language on subcontracting, leaves of absence and sick leave for maternity.

The Lucky Stores settlement will set an OPEIU pattern for much smaller stores in the area represented by Local 29, Bartley says.

NLRB Chairman Moves To Speed Up Cases

NLRB Chairman Betty Southard Murphy has formally recommended that the Board adopt and promptly implement 61 of the 69 recommendations made by the Chairman's Task Force to expedite case-handling procedures.

As of September 1976, there were 19,173 cases of all types pending disposition, compared with 17,996 at the end of last June.

Educational Materials Available For Members

Delegates to the 1974 Convention expressed the need for materials pertinent to the OPEIU and membership in the union. They also indicated an interest in information on the labor movement in general and in social, economic and political data relevant to them as both wage-earners and consumers.

In response, WHITE COLLAR will publish a continual listing of available resource material—pamphlets, books, brochures, subscriptions, films—many free and some offered at a very modest cost—which will prove useful to union member and officer alike—and provide a well-rounded "library" for every local.

For handy reference, we suggest you clip the lists as they appear in future issues.

Political Education

Equal Pay-Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

Available from Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210. 9 pages. Free in reasonable quantity. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to require that men and women performing equal work must receive equal pay. This pamphlet identifies the types of jobs to which the equal pay provisions apply and what action can be taken regarding the applicability of the equal pay standard.

Federal Labor Laws and Programs

180 pages. U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration. Bulletin 262. Available from Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. This booklet outlines major labor laws and tells where to get further information on each topic.

Growth of Labor Law in the U.S.

311 pages. 1967. U.S. Department of Labor. Available from Government Printing Office Washington, D.C. \$1.25 each. This booklet briefly outlines state laws on child labor, minimum wage, health and safety, workmen's compensation, labor relations, unemployment insurance, fair employment practices, and other areas. For more comprehensive information on your state laws covering these areas write the state department which administers these laws. Also check your telephone book for local or regional offices which may be located in your city.

Community Services and Consumer Information

Know Your Pension Plan

U.S. Department of Labor. Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 34 pages. 55 cents each. Federal law gives an employee the right to a copy of the pension plan. This pamphlet outlines where to find other needed information on pension plans.

Your Social Security

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Social Security Administration, 1325 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20203. 28 pages. Single copy free. This pamphlet is designed to answer most of the questions asked about social security benefits.

Consumer Information Index

Public Documents Distribution Center. Pueblo, Colorado 81009. 14 pages. Single copy free. Listed in this index are more than 200 consumer publications issued by the federal government devoted to helping consumers select, use and care for products such as clothing, appliances, food and other items. Other pamphlets, published in both English and Spanish, discuss child care, health, nutrition and safety.

Information for Consumers

Everybody's Money, P.O. Box 431, Madison, Wisconsin 53701. 48 pages. 50 cents each. This guide has helped the consumer find the proper agency to take a complaint to. It lists the major national, state and local consumer organizations, government agencies and top executives of major companies.

To Be Continued

Harvard Study Finds 1975 Bosses Are "Stuffed Shirts"

Today's American bosses are plastic men and stuffed shirts even more than in the 1950's, the heyday of conformity.

That's the conclusion reached in a study published in the prestigious Harvard Business Review, Cambridge, Mass., which reported that "the executives of 1975 form a more homogenous group than those from earlier periods."

The bulk of the executives

are male, Caucasian, from affluent families and from "a handful of universities." In summary, the study found that "the overall picture that emerges is one of a business leadership group lacking diversity of background and, indeed, becoming increasingly alike" and this "may not be compatible with meeting broad social expectations in a free and democratic society."

Anti-union Forces Suffer Severe Setback in Florida

Anti-union drive in Florida by the National Right-to-Work (for Less) Committee has been stalled—temporarily. Joined by the Chamber of Commerce, state and county representatives, the "Pay Less" reactionaries failed in an attempt to strip public employees of their

bargaining rights.

They needed 215,000 petitions to place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot, but got only 60,000. They now plan to begin another petition drive aimed at getting the proposal considered in the 1978 election.

FIET Eyes Global Bank Growth

Finland Congress Delegates Hear Need for Bank Unionism

President Howard Coughlin and Sec.-Treas. Bill Lowe represented the OPEIU as delegates from the U.S. and Canada, respectively, at the 18th World Congress of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical & Technical Employees (FIET), held in Helsinki, Finland, recently.

The Congress is held every three years. It was attended by 467 delegates, observers and guests representing 150 affiliated unions from 70 countries with a total membership of 6-million white-collar workers.

During the conference it was disclosed that a regional group known as EURO-FIET, comprising 3¼ million white collar employees in the Common Market and other European countries, has been set up with a permanent office in Brussels to monitor any changes which may effect members in the trade unions affiliated with it.

The directives issued by the European Commission are playing an increasingly important role in the running of industry and commerce in the EEC member countries, and the banking industry is no excep-

tion to these regulations.

During the debates on the claims put forward by FIET's Banking Section, it was pointed out that bank employees were now organizing themselves on a worldwide international scale and formulating policies to combat the international groups that had been set up by bank employers.

The first European Conference of Bank Employees was held in Zurich last year, and similar FIET conferences of bank employees have been held in Asia, Africa, and South America.

Attention was drawn to the fact that cartel agreements between national banks, groupings of banks from different countries for business purposes, and the formal and informal understandings between banks at international level, were not fully understood by many members of bank unions.

Speakers said the task of FIET was to publicize these secret agreements so that member unions would know what they were up against when they were negotiating with an employer in one particular coun-

try.

It was clear from comments made during the Congress that many employers were not happy about the fact that trade unions in the white-collar field were organizing on an international basis although the employers themselves had done this for many years.

With the expansion of multinational companies and international banking it was recognized that the cooperation and exchange of information between similar unions in different countries would become increasingly important.

The British National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) disclosed that it had a number of problems with foreign and overseas banks in the City of London, particularly the giant American banks which are the most anti-union of all.

If you move, send your old and new address, including zip code and social security or social insurance number to:

William A. Lowe, Sec.-Treas.
815 16th Street, N.W., Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20006

Equal Rights Amendment Ratified by Indiana State

Indiana has ratified the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution which it refused to do on two previous occasions. The amendment would ban discrimination based on sex by the Federal government, or any state or local government.

It's the 35th state to ratify the amendment which requires approval by 38 states before it becomes part of the Constitution. Supporters say Indiana's action signals a break in the

long logjam over its adoption.

Which states may next act on the amendment is not quite clear, according to Sheila Greenwald, executive director of ERAmerica, the coalition of 120 groups supporting ratification.

Among the states in which action is expected in the first few months of this year are North and South Carolina, Florida, Nevada and possibly Missouri.

Misguided Class Action Suits

(Continued from Page 1)

laid off in an economic downturn; who returns to work when the economy rebounds. It must be remembered that this system prevails only where a union holds a collective bargaining contract with an employer.

In other instances, roughly three out of four cases (75 percent of the work force in the United States is unorganized), lay-offs are determined by the employer without any regard whatsoever for seniority, age, sex or minorities.

Now we are faced with civil action suits by laid-off women and members of minority races who are, in effect, fighting the seniority system. They are contending that where employers did not in prior years make a practice of hiring women and minority workers that the seniority system is, therefore, flawed.

The Labor Movement asks those workers employed by employers who are not responsible for discrimination in the first place, what fairer formula than seniority can be used in times of lay-offs resulting from an economic recession? Some attorneys and opponents of organized labor by using this device are, in effect, carrying out a divisive tactic.

They are pitting whites against blacks and males against females. They are attacking the seniority system which, even in today's work force is still the only fair way of treating all workers—whites, blacks and women alike. The seniority system in most cases not only guarantees recall, but also protects pensions and fringe benefits.

We are not only supporting seniority in lay-off clauses but we also ask that the lay-off time during which a worker can be recalled be made indefinite. Suits attacking the seniority system are seeking to destroy the very fiber of organized labor and collective bargaining. If seniority is destroyed, minorities and females will be amongst those principally affected.

U.S. Price Index

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
New Base 1967=100

1975	
December	168.8
1976	
January	168.7
February	167.1
March	167.5
April	168.2
May	168.2
June	170.1
July	171.1
August	171.9
September	172.6
October	173.3
November	173.8
December	172.7

Canadian Price Index

Statistics Canada
New Base 1971=100

1975	
November	144.1
December	144.3
1976	
January	145.1
February	145.6
March	146.2
April	146.8
May	145.0
June	145.7
July	149.3
August	150.0
September	150.7
October	151.7
November	152.2
December	154.3