Canada’s OPEIU Div. Holds First Convention

The first Convention of the Canadian Division of the Office & Professional Employees International Union was held in Ottawa, March 31 and April 1, being chaired by Canadian OPEIU Director Romeo Corbel. Delegates enthusiastically adopted a resolution calling for a contribution of 5 cents per person per month from the OPEIU per capita tax to be sent to the Canadian Labour Congress as a contribution to CLC’s Committee on Political Education (COPE).

Big Data Processing Unit Won by OPEIU in Texas

A major victory in the data processing field was won by the OPEIU in Texas when a unit of 250 office and clerical employees at the headquarters of Agency Research Control, Inc. (ARC), in Bryan-College Station, voted for collective bargaining by a margin of 112-to-102. International Representative Jack Langford reports.

He says the NLRB election climaxed a strenuous and hard-fought campaign in which management used every effort to persuade the employees, without success, to vote against unionization.

The company, which is the leading data processing firm in the country, provides automated accounting services for insurance agencies in this country and Puerto Rico. It also operates regional servicing offices in Houston, Tex.; Chicago, Ill.; Hartford, Conn.; Atlanta, Ga.; and Los Angeles, Calif.

In another NLRB election in Wisconsin, 65 office employees at Monarch Range, which manufactures stoves in Beaver Dam, voted for OPEIU representation by a 3-to-1 margin. This campaign was led by Midwest Council Representative Stan Lukar. The newly organized group will become members of Local 39 in Madison, Wis.

Local 13 Business Representative Patrick D. O’Flaherty reports winning a unit of 19 office employees at Schaeffer Mfg. Company in St. Louis, Mo. The vote for OPEIU representation was 14-to-4.

Study Says U.S. Pay Rates Have Slipped to 5th Place

Average hourly earnings of manufacturing workers in the United States slipped from first place among the world’s industrialized nations to fifth in the five-year period between 1972 and 1977, according to a study conducted by Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby, a New York consulting firm.

The study shows that Japanese workers averaged $6.70 an hour at the end of 1977, based on October 1978 currency exchange rates. In Sweden, the pay was $6.13 an hour, based on 1976 figures, the latest available.

Belgian workers averaged $6.10 hourly during 1977, and in West Germany the average pay was $5.76 an hour. U.S. production workers averaged $5.63 an hour in 1977.

In 1972, the U.S. stood in first place with an average manufacturing hourly rate of $3.81, while Japan was sixth with a $2.86 hourly pay average. A year later, the Japanese worker’s pay had more than doubled, while U.S. average pay had risen slightly less than 48 percent.

Brewery Yields 31 1/2% Pay Boosts

3-Year Miller Pact Also Liberalizes Fringe Benefits

Across-the-board pay boosts totaling 31 1/2% over three years, with improved fringe benefits were won in a new agreement concluded by Local 9 for its bargaining unit at Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee, Wis., Business Manager Edward J. Kubicki reports.

The new agreement calls for a 10.5% wage boost in the first year, and 7% in each of the following two years plus a 3.5% merit increase. The second shift premium was raised to $154 an hour (was $134), and the third shift to $204 from the previous $184.

Other gains are an additional holiday, Washington’s Birthday, in the first contract year. A new clause makes proration toward fifth and sixth vacation weeks in the calendar year prior to full eligibility instead of the previous arrangement.

Health-welfare provisions, together with insurance coverage, were vastly improved. Major medical was increased to $50,000, and a new surgical-medical plan provides benefits up to $10,000 maximum per illness or disability. Retirees will receive the same benefits as active employees, less medican benefits.

Eligible dependent children will be provided coverage through the calendar year they become age 25 (was 22).

Life insurance coverage was raised to a top figure of $18,000 (was $15,000); total and permanent disability to a top maximum of $155 a week (was $125), and AD&D benefits to a $160 maximum (was $120).

Retiree life insurance for the first 12 months following retirement was raised to $12,500, and the death benefit was raised to $2,000 from the previous $1,500.

The general wage increase and health-welfare improvements are retroactive to March 1. International Representative Billie Adams and Kubicki led the unit negotiating team which included Lee Roy Krupinski, Dick Paulin, Shala Olson, Dennis Hesslink and Dick Breitling.

March C.P.I. at Record High

The U.S. Consumer Price Index in March rose to 209.1, a 1% increase over the previous month, or at a 13% annual rate setting an all-time high.

Meanwhile, Social Security announced that beneficiaries’ checks for July will be increased by 9.3%.

Big British Bank Goes All-Out For Unionism

Assigns Two Staff Members to Assist in Expanding NUBE

When a man bites a dog that is news, but when a bank actively joins hands with a white-collar union to enlist its own employees as union members that is really BIG NEWS. But it happens in Britain—not the U.S.A., and to say.

The giant Midland Bank in Britain has dropped its neutrality on whether or not its employees should belong to a union and is now enthusiastically encouraging them to do so, according to the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE).

Under a mutual arrangement, the bank assigns to the two staff members, one clerical and the other technical, to expand union services to its employees. The two representatives, who are NUBE members, were recruited from among Midland employees by the union with the bank, maintaining their existing grades and salary progression over a three-year period.

The bank also agreed to pay their moving expenses if a mutual decision is made to assist in order to bring them within a reasonable traveling distance of Central London. The function of the union-oriented representatives are:

1. The presentation of individual grievances, both verbally and in writing to the bank so that they may be handled more quickly and effectively.

2. To assist NUBE bargaining in contract negotiations with the bank.

3. To handle secretarial work in connection with NUBE’s Midland Bank committees.

4. To improve the communications facilities available to the union which means better arrangements for circulating NUBE literature, giving it more access to offices and bank branches, together with the opportunity to address new employees at induction courses.

NUBE, Britain’s largest union representing banking and financial employees, has 16,000 members at the Midland Bank. It says Midland employees are now joining its ranks at the rate of 1,000 a month.
### Rickeyver Rips Shysters

Shady lawyers and greedy employers for have been making a fortune during Labor Day in a six-week-long holiday which labor leaders have tried to correct through Labor Law Reform—so far without success.

In a recent speech before the N.Y. Patent Law Association in New York, Admiral Hyman G. Rickeyer, chief architect of the nation's nuclear fleet, takes the legal profession to task for using the same tactics against the armed services in the performance of their duties.

Describing many lawyers as "mercenaries" who worked with defense contractors to delay litigation and file excessive claims against the services, he said "the legal profession is making a great negative contribution to our defense." Adding:

"In the hands and powers many lawyers seem to have forgotten their obligations. By so doing, they alienate their countrymen, breed distrust of our institutions and those who run them, and undermine the traditional values of honor, humility and good dealing."

Citving his own "first-hand experiences" with lawyers, he said they had deliberately prolonged various disputes between contractors and the Navy in order to make more money for lawyers involved. Beyond this, Admiral Rickeyer added that "large contractors and their well-paid law firms" had sought to defer or even to avoid reporting large losses to stockholders by dragging litigation out in court.

"Several large shipbuilders were for many years able to avoid reporting such losses," he revealed, "simply by predicting optimistic recoveries from pending litigation, and the longer a case drags the greater the likelihood of government people leaving for other jobs, memories fading, and the case finally being settled independent of the legal merits."

At one point in his speech, Admiral Rickeyer said that "there has been a lack of cooperation by lawyers—and the public knows it. A recent national poll found them ranked below garbage collectors in public esteem."

Like Admiral Rickeyer, we feel it's time the American Bar Association (ABA) gets down to doing business by disbaring, instead of protecting, these unscrupulous members.

### Why U.S. Dollar Falls

The role of American capital in financing foreign competitors of U.S. industries is discussed in an article published in a Japanese English-language magazine, "The Oriental Economist."

The article, entitled "Internationalization of Money; A Survey of Foreign Banks' Loans to Japanese Firms," points out that major American banks are lending heavily to major Japanese corporations. The United States leads in the number of foreign banks having branches in Japan, with 22 of a total of 83, the article reveals.

"It is especially noteworthy that all of Japan's five major steel makers make their appearance among the 10 biggest borrowers," the article notes. "Other leading borrowers belong to such process industries as electric power, shipbuilding and chemicals as well as such service industries as transportation and aviation. All of the leading borrowers are representative of big business in Japan and are aggressively engaged in international business."

According to the article, Citibank (formerly the National City Bank) is the third biggest foreign bank in Japan with 106 corporate borrowers of 500 million yen or more as clients. The second largest is the Bank of America. Chase Manhattan is third.

Before it is too late, these multinational banks must be brought under control. Here we find the root cause of the export of jobs, adverse balance of payments, the decline in the value of the dollar, and the general lowering of living standards for the average American family whose wage scale now ranks fifth for industrialized nations.

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### Bills to Bar Hypnotists

A mass meeting of hypnotists sponsored by OPEIU Hypnotists Union Local 472 and other hypnotic organizations was held in Van Nuts, Calif., on April 22, to mobilize public support in their fight against four bills now before the California Legislature. The bills are designed to outlaw the practice of hypnotism in that state by anyone except a few licensed individuals.

According to Local 472 President J. Bartel, the four bills aim at restricting Sec. 2906 of the state's Business & Professions Code which now protects the practice of hypnotism. As Assemblyman Robert Barber has introduced bills 1031 and 1072 in the Assembly.

Senators Alan Stroyer and William Craven have introduced bills 766 and 661, respectively, in the Senate.

Hypnotists OPEIU Local 472 is circulating petitions against the anti-hypnotist bills, pointing out that they would deprive "a wide variety of people from receiving professional help if they want a psychologist," adding that "union hypnotists now fill the tremendous gap left open by the medical and psychological profession."

Local 472 President Bartel says that "the Hypnotists Union and the Hypnotists Examining Council have drawn up guidelines for the schooling and experience of professional hypnotists, whereas licensed medical people insist that if any of the bills become law, it would "drive up the cost of hypnotherapy" and create "a demand by pressure groups" and "special interest.""

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### Sea-Land Loses Seattle Dispute

**Arbiter Finds 6 OPEIU Members Wrongly Penalized**

Grievances of six employees of the 16,000-employee Sea-Land offshoot in Seattle, Wash., who were penalized with suspensions for violating company policies, were upheld by a state labor board.

According to the fact that the company must rescind the discipline imposed on the grievants; make them whole for losses they sustained, and reestablish its past disciplinary policy until such time as it negotiates a mutually agreeable change of this policy with the OPEIU.

Local 8 Business Manager Don E. Olson, Jr., who handled the case for the employees, contended that the company had violated its OPEIU agreement with the new policy which it interpreted at the Seattle facility on Feb. 6, 1978, without prior negotiations.

The current Sea-Land agreement is national in scope and covers employees in several operating companies not represented by OPEIU Locals. Special agreements applying to individual facilities, or bargaining units, are interpreted as separate agreements to the national contract, the last appendix making clear for the Seattle location.

The employer argued that the national agreement did not preclude management from "flexibly exercising its prerogatives to meet specific problems at its various facilities," and contended that it was only after its previous "no punch" policy failed in Seattle that it instituted the new disciplinary procedures there.

But the arbiter reasoned that the employer’s right to promulgate rules is "separable and distinct from its right to alter the basic form of its disciplinary policy and procedures," and that it was obligated by "the agreement to re-

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### Profits Soar As Wages Fall Behind

When the Carter administration announced its anti-inflation guidelines last October, it set a 7 percent limit on all wage increases but no controls of any kind on prices or interest rates.

Organized labor, including the major unions, protested that the administration plan would prove ineffective as an anti-inflation weapon. It failed during the Nixon Administration.

When the last quarter of 1978, profits of the top 449 corporations and banks soared an incredible 27.7 percent over the previous quarter, unions and business scores all-time highs. As an example, General Motors in the final quarter of 1978 regis-

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### See survey on Page 1 which finds wage scales of U.S. workers are now fifth among industrialized countries. Steep decline has occurred in the five-year period, 1972-1977.

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**OPEIU**

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Office Automation Worries Europe's Unions

See Five Million Secretarial and Typist Jobs Lost, or 25% in Coming Decade

It is estimated that the capacity of a microcomputer on one single chip by 1985 will equal that which some 25 years ago required a room full of equipment, according to the International Labor Organization which sees micro-electronics as the "most revolutionary technology of the 20th Century."

Experts have been falling, too. Execution of a computer instruction that cost about $280 in 1960 was down to about two cents in 1970 and is about two-tenths of a cent today.

The International Labor Organization has estimated that if technological progress in the auto industry had been as rapid as that in the electronic industry, the cost of producing one Red Ford Mustang would have run 500,000 kilometers (312,500 miles) on one liter (a quart) of gasoline!

The growing impact of computers and "word processors" on office employment in Europe was the subject of a seminar held recently in Vienna, Austria, sponsored by the International Federation of Com- mercial, Clerical, and Allied Workers (FIET), of which the OPEU is a member.

A background paper prepared by FIET's Secretary set the framework for the two-day discussions which conclude today. He estimated that automation will have on office jobs in the coming decade, particularly the occupation of secretaries and typists.

"In view of the relatively low cost of the new technology, especially as the rate of automation increases," said the paper, "it is expected that most European countries will switch to automated offices in the next ten years, following the experience in the U.S., where the trend of 400,000 word-processors per country is forecast to double in the next three years."

FIET says that independent consultants have made certain in Europe which suggest that productivity of secretaries increases between 25% and 150% using word-processors, with an average of 130% increase, which represents an improvement of 40% in the efficiency of office work.

The central reason for improved productivity is reduced time in retyping material because of errors, or drafting changes. In addition, routine material can be reproduced in amended form with only slight retyping required for amendments.

The new technology achieves the storing of greater masses of information electronically, making redundant many tasks currently performed by filing, library and secretarial staffs. Managers and techni- cians will, therefore, have direct access to material without having to request the services of secretarial or administrative staffs, the paper discloses.

Secretaries, Typists Face Job Losses

Measuring the scope of automation is bound to be hazardous, the paper continues. However, the Siemens multinational German conglomerate estimates that in the Federal Republic of Germany 40% of existing office work will be automated, and this figure appears a reasonable estimate for other European countries, it observes.

While many factors concerning automation may change or cannot be accurately forecast, nevertheless FIET presents some tentative judgments on office employment in Europe over the next decade:

In European offices the rate of productivity growth could accelerate from its present trend rate of about 1% to something like 8% as automation takes over in a ten-year period. If the output rate of growth continues at a past-trend rate of approximately 6%, then five million office jobs could fall by 20% to 25% over the next ten years.

"That could mean that of the 18 to 19-million typists and secretaries in Western Europe, five million could lose their jobs by 1985."

The paper cites some examples of the office functions which have now been computerized such as cost accounting, auditing, communication, general administrative work, personnel research and planning, resource administration, finance, inventory, payroll, and personnel.

Estimating productivity growth based by the development of micro-computers will lead to an expansion of computer sales at the lower end of the size spectrum, the FIET paper adds that "more significantly in the purchase of micro-computers on a piecemeal basis designed for specific tasks."

However, the FIET paper adds that "the speed of office automation will depend on a variety of economic and institutional factors. On the economic side, it predicts that those countries with the highest labor costs will experience the fastest growth in automation, since the application of the new technology is primarily labor-saving."

Say Automation Now Social Matter

The paper pointed out that automation to date has largely "taken place on the basis of management decisions," motivated by short-term profit considerations. These social effects are likely to be ignored, and the possible benefits are unlikely to accrue to working people," it notes.

Consequently, the paper suggests that "trade union strategies must be made to make computerization decisions the result of negotiation between management and unions and indeed to ensure that the whole process, once the decision is made, becomes a joint undertakings at all levels of the enterprise."

It said that in some European countries progress is being made in this direction, citing as one example a recent agreement on computerization signed between the Norwegian Employers Association and the Norwegian Trade Union Federation.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there were 3% million secretaries and stenographers in this country in 1970 as well as one million typists. About two-thirds of the secretaries and one-half of the typists worked in factories, banks, insurance companies, real estate firms and government agencies.

Since only a small proportion of this country than in Europe, one can readily estimate that some 40% of this nation's office employees could also be affected in the coming decade if the European projections are on target.

Unlike Europe, however, where the majority of white collar employees belong to unions, those in North America for the most part are non-union. The latter, therefore, should give serious thought to their future job security. Coming technological developments already cast their shadows on the traditional way of life of office workers.

Strange to say, inquiries at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington indicate that no impact studies are being made in this country on the effects of automation in offices.

Not the least of the impact is the loss of office jobs which are expected to drop by 20% to 25% in the coming decade.

Winter Blizzards Have Delayed Union Reaction

During the heavy snowstorms last winter in Chicago and elsewhere, according to a report of the Joint Union-Management Committee of the 13,500 unionized office workers at Sears Roebuck, these were experienced as a "surprise attack" and delayed their union reaction.

"A lot of employees have a surprise when negotiations for a new contract are opened," commented one union officer. "We'll insist on an Act of God clause in the new agreement with the clear understanding that three feet of snow is an act of God."

Big Gains Made in New Domtar Fine Paper Pact

Wage boosts totaling almost $40 a week per individual, a new dental plan and more liberalized vacations were won by Local 263 in a two-year agreement renegotiated with Domtar Fine Paper, St. Catharines, Ontario, Local 263 President H. Gilles Storer said she's encouraged by the next wage agreement.

The Spanish government arrested 52 striking bank employees and fined them $3,500 each after they called a three-day strike to protest to the Spanish Prime Minister. Its European allies also sent similar protests to the Spanish government in several countries.

The Spanish government later informed FIET that it had re- nounced its threat to dismiss the bank strikers, although the charges against them had not yet been dropped.

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Women Lean Toward Unionism

Those Who Jobs Feel "Powerless" to Solve Their Problems

Some 80% of Europe's women are union members today. Some say this is a result of increased status jobs and many feel that to improve their conditions they must join together to present a solid front, according to an article in the February issue of the Storer said she's encouraged by unionism's future among women because she finds them thinking seriously about lifetime work, retirement plans and the benefits they want.

The Journal story said that while many women don't want another job, they do question why nurses earn only as much as male workers, since they have been hospitalization, the needs the extra coverage if she is working.

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from the desk of the

Labor Movement Opposes Constitutional Proposal

We recently received a letter from AFL-CIO President George Meany informing each International and the labor movement in general of the AFL-CIO’s opposition to a campaign by right-wing groups to have Congress convene to construct an amendment to the United States Constitution mandating a balanced federal budget.

Twenty-two states had already called for the Constitutional Convention. Since receipt of President Meany’s letter, four additional states followed. Once 34 states have called for, a Constitutional Convention, Article V of the Constitution requires the Congress to call this Convention to propose the amendment. In effect, therefore, only eight more states are needed to do the job.

President Meany is urging State Federations of Labor to lobby against this amendment. It is the AFL-CIO position that the economic effects of such an amendment could be disastrous. In addition, there are numerous uncertainties and dangers surrounding the Constitutional process. For these reasons, the AFL-CIO opposes this legislative proposal.

We have not had a Constitutional Convention since the Founding Fathers first met to amend the Articles of Confederation and ended up drafting an entirely new Constitution.

Several attempts, however, have been made to call a Constitutional Convention. All have failed. The most recent campaign occurred in the 1960s when the right-wing attempted to overturn the “one man—one vote” decisions of the Supreme Court. It failed perilously close to succeeding. Thirty-three states approved it, only one short of the necessary 34.

Poses Dangerous Threat

The real danger is that any Constitutional Convention could open up the Constitution to any and all issues, no matter how extreme. The threat of a “run-away convention,” considering all kinds of extraneous issues such as the “one man—one vote” abolition, income tax repeal and a national “right-to-work” law, is a distinct possibility and would pose a considerable threat to Constitutional stability.

For example, if such an amendment had applied last year, the current fiscal year (1979) budget would have been cut by nearly $40 billion. Federal programs would be devastated. Unemployment would increase and national security would be threatened. State and local governments would face the loss of federal aid for transportation, housing, education, job programs, law enforcement and all other categories of assistance. Significant increases in state and local taxes would be required to only partially offset lost federal revenues.

Financial programs for people, such as federal aid to education, enforcement of civil rights and labor laws, funding for CETA, public works and many others, would feel the fiscal axe of this amendment. Key federal research and development programs in health, energy, science, agriculture and defense would be significantly curtailed.

Would Affect Jobs

All regulatory programs in such areas as OSHA, the environment and consumer protection would be severely weakened. All of these cutbacks would immediately and adversely affect employment in the private and public sector.

Unfortunately, we are in an anti-government climate which may lean toward a Constitutional amendment to mandate a balanced budget. The success of Proposition 13 would indicate that voter discontent would lend support to this right-wing effort. At the present time, several states and many local jurisdictions (cities and counties) require balanced operating budgets.

Our task at the moment is to defeat meat-axe proposals which we fear would result in a Constitutional Convention. The organized labor movement, and the OPEIU in particular, could be severely hurt by proposals emanating from a Constitutional Convention. We join with the AFL-CIO in opposing the attempt by right-wing groups to call a Constitutional Convention.

See story on this page asking for volunteers for the AFL-CIO Price Watch Operation in each community. We urge all OPEIU members to join!

Fired Strikers Win Back Jobs

Glass Containers Anti-Union Ploy Backfires

Administrative Law Judge James T. Youngblood rules that Class Containers Corp. violated the labor law when it refused to sign a contract negotiated with the OPEIU Local 106 following the union’s arbitral decision to have Class fire a number of workers. The company was ordered to pay the workers back wages of $22,000. The company planned to appeal the decision.

Operation Price Watch Seeks OPEIU Volunteers

AFL-CIO President George Meany has appointed Director of Community Services Leo Petri to organize and implement an Operation Price Watch program, and urges all members to volunteer.

The monitoring program is being organized through state and local labor bodies. In a letter to all Internationals, President Meany said: “Let’s give our fellow Americans that the trade union movement cares enough about price-gouging to do something about it.”

Volunteers will be assigned in each community to monitor prices of food, medicines and medical care, clothing, transportation, shelter and utilities, and gas and fuel by week.

$3,500 Per Member Won at Canadian Paper Firm

Wage gains totaling more than $3,500 per member, with numerous improved fringe benefits, was obtained for its bargaining unit at Boise Cascade Canada Ltd., in a recent National Labor Relations Board strike at Kenora, Ontario.

The new agreement, retroactive to May 1, 1978, calls for a $74 per month general pay increase, with retroactive to the date they were discharged.

When the unit contract came up for renegotiation, the company kept striking until the contract expired on August 30, 1978. When the contract passed, it was brought out to the NLRB hearing in Boston that a decertification petition was being filed in the plant with the company’s knowledge, although the bargaining unit at that time was unaware of the process.

But the company lost the decertification election, the real point of the stalling tactics, and then notified the strikers that their jobs had been filled by other employees it had hired to replace them.

In a somewhat similar case involving a Portland, Me., employeer, the National Labor Relations Board struck down a 3-to-2 decision of a long-standing requirement that illegally discharged strikers must request reinstatement to trigger an employer’s back pay liability.

The Board ruled that a discharged striker is entitled to back pay from the date of his illegal discharge to the date he is offered reinstatement. The historic ruling overturns a 50-year-old precedent.

“A discharged striker is a discharged employee, and entitled to be treated as such, for there is nothing peculiar to a strike which justifies distinctions in treatment,” the majority declared. “The nature of the employee’s unlawful conduct is not changed by the fact that the employee happens to be a striker at the time of discharge.”

U.S. Price Index

Canadian Price Index

New Base 1972 = 100

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

William A. Lowe, Sec.-Treas.
1816 16th Street, N.W., Suite 604
Washington, D.C. 20006