



WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 408

January-March 1983

Executive Board Elects Corbeil New S-T

Upon the retirement of long-time Secretary-Treasurer William A. Lowe, the duties of that office will be assumed by Canadian Director and International Vice President Roméo Corbeil, reports International President John Kelly. In January Lowe announced his retirement, effective May 1, 1983. And, at a special OPEIU Executive Board meeting in February, Corbeil was unanimously elected to serve out the term as Secretary-Treasurer until elections at the June OPEIU Convention.

Corbeil comes to the office with a long history of labor movement and OPEIU leadership. In 1956 he was hired by OPEIU as an organizer. Corbeil immediately began to organize new units in Quebec with particular emphasis upon Montreal Local 57, that had only 100 members at that time.

By the end of 1958 the Local had increased its rolls fourfold. Within 10 years after Corbeil had been hired, Montreal Local 57 had become a large, substantial union with more than 1,700 members and five full-time representatives.

Under Corbeil's direction, the Montreal membership continued to grow. By late 1974, Local 57 had passed the 3,000-member mark, standing as the second-largest OPEIU union in Canada and sixth in the entire International Union.

Roméo Corbeil was named regional director for eastern Canada in 1969 and became an International Vice President at the 1971 Convention. In 1974, in addition to his Executive Board position, Corbeil was chosen as Canadian director for the International Union.

One of Corbeil's major campaigns was a drive to enroll the bank clericals at the Montreal City and District Savings Bank (La Banque d'Épargne de la Cité et du District de Montreal) in late 1966. Clerks signed membership cards by the hundreds, and in 1967 the unit at the main headquarters and 57 branches was certified. Due to their OPEIU membership and the leadership of Roméo Corbeil, the bank workers, who had been among the lowest paid, became the best-paid and best-protected in Canada. This successful new unit was separately chartered as



Roméo Corbeil

Montreal Local 434.

Once appointed Canadian Director, Corbeil turned his attention to organizing throughout Canada. In 1971 Canadian membership stood at 12,530 members. Today, because of the energy, vitality, and leadership abilities of Roméo Corbeil, it stands at more than 25,000.

These same qualities Corbeil will bring to the office of Secretary-Treasurer. "We could not have

hoped for a better, more capable person to represent OPEIU and its members as Secretary-Treasurer," said President John Kelly. "I think it is especially appropriate that the second-highest office in the International is held by a Canadian and one who brings such strengths to the office," Kelly added.

S-T Bill Lowe Retires

William A. Lowe, who served as Secretary-Treasurer for 10 years, will be sorely missed by the OPEIU, its officers, staff and members. Lowe, long considered one of the most able Secretary-Treasurers in the AFL-CIO and CLC, also came to the office with a long and fruitful history of OPEIU involvement.

The large group of white collar employees at British Columbia Electric (now known as B.C. Hydro) were represented by an independent association—the British Columbia Electric Employees Association. In 1955 the Association voted to affiliate with OPEIU. At that time Bill Lowe was the Association's president and prime mover in the affiliation. The new affiliate became Local 378.

Following the affiliation vote, Bill Lowe was hired as an OPEIU international representative. Lowe immediately turned his attention to expanding the ranks of Local 378 that had 1,000 members at the time and Vancouver's Local 15 with 100 to 200 members. Because of his skills as an organizer and a leader in those early years, Local 15 now represents more than 2,000 members. Local 378 represents nearly 8,000.

In addition, as the new western Canada representative, Lowe went into the "prairie provinces" to bring the first OPEIU locals to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Local 342 in Winnipeg was chartered in 1956; Local 379 in Calgary was enrolled in 1958. And, four years later, another well-established independent joined the International, when employees of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office received their charter as Local 397 in Regina.

Lowe's activities were eventually expanded into the United States when he became northwestern regional director, covering both the Pacific Northwest states
(Continued on page 4)

OPEIU Trains Tennessee Valley Authority Stewards



Tennessee Valley Authority shop stewards learn skills for effective grievance handling.

During January and February the International Union conducted three day-long steward training classes for the job stewards at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), where OPEIU represents nearly 6,000 membrs.

The members at TVA have been particularly hard hit by the new Administration and hard-line bargaining. They are in a "PATCO situation" in that they have all signed no-strike pledges when accepting employment. They are covered neither by the National Labor Relations Act nor the federal sector laws on bargaining. They, therefore, have no protection for

their rights, except those guaranteed by the OPEIU contract. For that reason, it is particularly important at TVA that the stewards police and administer the contract effectively.

The International, therefore, offered Saturday classes on January 29 in Knoxville, Tennessee; February 5 in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and February 12 in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.



OPEIU Director of Organization Mark Reader outlines the history of collective bargaining at the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The classes focussed on instilling skills in OPEIU job stewards that would better enable them to represent their members in the grievance procedure. They covered informal bargaining with management prior to filing a grievance, the difference between a grievance and a complaint or problem; techniques for investigating a grievance; what constitutes a successful grievance; and bargaining with management at the grievance steps.

In addition, the classes covered the other roles of a job steward: a communicator between members and the Union and between members and TVA management; a political activist who solicits members support for issues affecting them and for support of the Voice of the Electorate—OPEIU's political action fund; and an organizer who informs the non-members

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Important Notice
Convention Call
See Page 5.

WHITE COLLAR

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

JOHN KELLY
President

WILLIAM A. LOWE
Secretary-Treasurer

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GWEN WELLS
Managing Editor



PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Published quarterly, by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. (ISSN 0043-4876)
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Subscription Price \$1 a Year

Vote 100 Club

The VOTE money keeps pouring in! "VOTE" stands for Voice of the Electorate, which is the Office and Professional Employees International Union's political action fund.

Although many are contributing smaller amounts, more and more members are enrolling in the "President's 100 Club." To become a Club member, a contributor must give at least \$100 per year to VOTE.

These monies, and all money collected for VOTE, is used to support political candidates who support working-people programs — candidates who are dedicated to turning the economy around and putting American workers back to work, but without gutting the social programs for the needy and elderly of this nation.

With the last issue of *White Collar*, we began reporting contributors to the 100 Club—members who are not full-time employees of local unions. Additional such contributors include Fred Silverman, Clarence Simons, Pamela Simpson, Stephen D. Slate, Roger C. Smith, James R. Solomon, Donald Speer, Frank Strocchio, M. J. Stubblefield, Robert Twietmeyer, Robert Umberger, and Donald Utley.

Edward Vaughn, Mary Ellen Walls, Jerome Walter, Louis Warwick, Phillip Watkins, Gene A. Westlake, James Whatman, William Weisberger, Donald Wold, Mike Woody, Sheldon F. Zarin and Elaine Zini.

Several groups also combined resources to obtain one membership in the 100 Club. These include the delegates to the 1982 Southwest Educational Conference; Local 52 Executive Board; Local 119 Executive Board; Local 268 Executive Board; Teresa, Janice, Debbie and Alex; and The Cumberland Storeroom Loyal.

Each and every one of these member deserves special thanks.

Supreme Court rules

R-T-W Group Illegally Solicits Funds

(Washington, PAI)—The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the National Right to Work Committee violated federal election laws by the method it used in soliciting funds for candidates it supported.

The court's unanimous ruling overturned a 1981 federal appeals court decision and supported the position of the Federal Election Commission. The FEC's position was backed by the AFL-CIO in a court brief.

The so-called Right to Work Committee, whose aim it is to outlaw the union shop, had maintained that everyone on its mailing list was a "member" of the organization who could be solicited for its political action committee.

Under federal election law, a non-profit corporation such as the Right to Work Committee, may solicit only its active members.

The Supreme Court ruled that those on the R-T-W Committee's mailing list were not members in the usual sense of playing a part in its operations, electing its officials, or exercising any control over expenditures.

The AFL-CIO had said in its brief that unless the Supreme Court overturned the appeals court, non-profit corporations would be able to use their funds to solicit political contributions beyond the boundaries set by Congress for unions and business firms.

The Supreme Court ruling upholds an earlier ruling by a federal district court, which had levied a \$10,000 fine for the R-T-W Committee's violation.

In view of this decision, it is interesting to note that the R-T-W Committee has filed many charges in recent years, usually groundless, against other organizations for alleged election law violations.

Put People First, Canada's Bishops Ask

Industrialized democracies must reorder their values and priorities to meet peoples' basic social and economic needs, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops warned in a statement on the free world's current economic crisis.

"From the standpoint of the church's social teachings," the bishops said, "we firmly believe that present economic realities reveal a moral disorder in our society."

"The present recession appears to be symptomatic of a much larger structural crisis in the international system of capitalism."

Capital takes precedent

In an age of automation and computers where human work is rapidly being replaced by machines, "capital" is asserted as the dominant organizing principle of economic life, the statement noted.

This orientation directly contradicts the ethical principle that labor, not capital, must be given priority in the development of an economy based on justice.

"There is, in other words, an ethical order in which human labor, the subject of production, takes precedence over capital and technology. This is the priority of labor principle."

While directed mainly at the Canadian economy, the bishops' statement has wide applicability to other industrialized economies. Like the U.S. economy, the Canadian economy is in recession with double-digit unemployment.

The statement, issued by the CCCB's Commission on Social Affairs, relies heavily on Pope John Paul II's 1981 encyclical to Roman Catholic bishops defending workers' rights, and warning of the "dehumanizing excesses" of modern economic systems. It cites two fundamental Christian principles as the basis for a new approach to economic recovery.

First priority must be given to the real victims of the current recession—the unemployed, the poor, pensioners, women, and young people, the bishops declare in the statement, "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis." Second, economic policies must reflect the realization that the rights of workers are more important than the maximization of profits by corporations.

The bishops outlined a five-point short-term strategy for government and business to pursue:

- Unemployment, rather than inflation, should be recognized as the No. 1 problem in overcoming the present economic crisis.

- Policies should aim at creating permanent and meaningful jobs for people in local communities. These should emphasize increased production, creation of new labor-intensive industries for basic needs, and measures to ensure job security.

- A more balanced and equitable program

should be developed for reducing and stemming the rate of inflation.

- Greater emphasis should be given to the goal of social responsibility in the current recession. This means that every effort must be made to curtail cutbacks in social services, maintain adequate health care and social security benefits, and guarantee special assistance to the unemployed, welfare recipients, the working poor, and one-industry towns suffering from plant shutdowns.

- Labor unions should be given a more decisive and responsible role in developing policies for economic recovery and employment.

Serving public needs

As long as technology and capital are not harnessed by society to serve basic human needs, the bishops said, they are likely to become an enemy, rather than an ally in the development of a people.

"By placing greater importance on the accumulation of profits and machines than on the people who work in a given economy, the value, meaning and dignity of human labor is violated," the bishops said.

"By creating conditions for permanent unemployment, an increasingly large segment of the population is threatened with the loss of human dignity. In effect, there is a tendency for people to be treated as an impersonal force having little or no significance beyond their economic purpose in the system."

Canada's present strategy for economic recovery, similar to that of the Reagan Administration, aims at restoring profitability and competitiveness in certain industries and providing more favorable conditions for private investment. The causes of inflation are seen as workers' wages, government spending, and low productivity rather than monopoly control of prices. In its measures to achieve recovery, government has strengthened business through corporate tax reductions and direct investment incentives, the statement observed.

Alternative approach

"In effect, the survival of capital takes priority over labor in present strategies for economic recovery," the bishops said. In offering an alternative approach to recovery, they stressed the goals of combating unemployment by stimulating production and permanent job creation in basic industries, developing a more balanced and equitable program for curbing inflation, and maintaining health care, social security, and special assistance programs.

"As a country, we have the resources, the capital, the technology, and above all else the aspirations and skills of working men and women required to build an alternative economic future," the bishops said, urging a public

OPEIU Subscribes to Press Associates, Inc.

OPEIU and its newspaper *White Collar* have subscribed to Press Associates, Inc.—a news service for labor union publications. The two columns on the facing page—"Work and Health" and "Washington Window"—are part of that service.

Beginning with this issue "Washington Window," which is a political editorial column, will appear regularly in *White Collar*. "Work and Health" will appear only when the subject matter is relevant to our white collar membership.

We think these are important additions to our newspaper, which will generate greater interest and appeal. They also impart information on timely issues—issues on which our readers should be made more aware.

We understand that many of our members will not agree with the opinions expressed, and we would like to hear from you in those cases.

Beginning with the next issue of *White Collar* we hope to publish letters from our members either supporting or refuting the positions in the two columns. No anonymous letters will be published. Because of space limitations letters may be edited to fit.

Let us hear from you.

Work and Health
by Press Associates, Inc.

Dismantling OSHA

by Phillip L. Polakoff

"Your friend isn't dead yet—just terribly ill and weak."

The spokesman, having informed the crowd of anxious workers, turned and closed the door to the sickroom.

The sign on the outside read: "OSHA."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration—to give the "patient" a full name—is being crippled by the Reagan Administration to a degree that could hardly be matched by the worst imaginable industrial accident.

But the clobbering of OSHA into near impotence is no accident. It is a calculated and blunt attack on the law Congress enacted in 1970 to give American men and women safer workplaces.

This is not a straightforward attack. The enfeebling of OSHA is not being accomplished through the legislative amendment process. It is not being done in accordance with the will of the people. Polls show an overwhelming support for maintaining, even expanding, workers' on-the-job safety and health protections. It is not being brought about through judicial interpretations of the law, but even despite court decisions in some cases.

No. OSHA has been feinted and outflanked by shifty administrative footwork under the banner of "deregulation" which has so tilted the rules in favor of the employer that the law, so far as workers are concerned, is approaching the point of uselessness.

Led by Reagan's head of the agency, Assistant Secretary of Labor Thorne G. Aucter, the continuing assault over the last couple of years has:

- Gutted the agency's unannounced inspection procedure, one of its most effective weapons;
- Weakened penalties for safety and health violations;
- Urged regional offices to reduce fines and the number of contested citations;
- Delayed and softened safety and health standards and regulations, with the assistance of the White House Office of Management and Budget;
- Undercut workers' right to file complaints, either in person or through designated representatives;
- Rescinded the rule that workers be paid when they accompany inspectors; and
- Slashed, with considerable help from the Reagan budget cuts, the inspection staff from its authorized 1980 level of 1,600 (even then considered too small) to around 1,000.

The list of weakening actions could go on and on.

Figures compiled by the AFL-CIO from OSHA's own federal compliance activity reports show a dramatic fall-off in enforcement activity from January 1980 to June 1982. The only exception was a reported 11 percent gain in general-scheduled inspections.

But even that "exception" is misleading. Many inspections under OSHA's new "targeting" policy are limited to a review of employers' records rather than a comprehensive inspection. If the employer's records show a rate of accidents that is better than the national average, an OSHA inspector can decide that no further inspection is needed.

This "targeting" policy has exempted three-fourths of all manufacturing employers from routine inspection. The exemption has effectively removed 13 million workers from the protections the law intended them to have.

Further evidence of OSHA slackness can be seen in its sorry citation record:

- A drop of 11 percent in initial inspection citations (despite the emphasis on high-hazard industries);
- A plunge of 51 percent in Serious Citations issued;
- A nose-dive of 89 percent in Willful Citations.

The same sort of downhill slide is evident in fines assessed against wrongdoers now that all penalties above \$10,000 have to go to Washington for approval.

Between October 1979 and September 1980, OSHA levied some 100 penalties of at least \$10,000. Between April 1981 and March 1982, the agency slapped on only six.

That's not a sign that things are getting better—as any worker on the firing line every day knows. It's a near-last gasp of a weakened agency.

Yet the need is tragically still with us. Although record unemployment in 1982 may have skewed the figures—an ironic "bright" spot—in 1981 alone, workers lost an estimated \$5.1 billion in wages and another \$3.4 billion was paid out in medical expenses. In 1981, on-the-job accidents claimed the lives of 4,360 workers and there were more than 2.4 million disabling accidents. Total costs of all occupational illnesses and accidents in 1981 was a staggering \$32.5 billion.

A major question in 1983 is how long will Congress and the American people—especially working men and women—permit the Reagan Administration to keep on dismantling a hard-won right such as OSHA by executive actions and administrative end runs?

(Dr. Polakoff is the director of the Western Institute for Occupational/Environmental Sciences.)



Washington Window

Reagan at Halftime— From Tragedy to Farce

by Press Associates, Inc.

It has been said that history repeats itself—first as tragedy, then as farce. But has it ever happened in one presidential term?

It's now halftime for the Reagan Administration and the quarterback is congratulating himself on a great first half. Well, he did smash a lot of records.

And that's the tragedy.

The tragedy is that President Reagan's policies established a record for the longest post-war recession.

The tragedy is that the Reagan team set a record for the highest unemployment rate in 40 years.

The tragedy is that the Reagan policies have pushed the number of unemployed and underemployed to an astonishing total of some 20 million.

The tragedy is that, in leading the 1981 tax cut raid on the Treasury, the Reagan team deprived the government of \$750 billion in revenue which is a basic cause of Reagan's historic deficits.

The tragedy is that the Reagan game plan broke the 50-year-old record for business bankruptcies and made foreclosure a common occurrence for farm families.

The tragedy is that the Reagan team, in the name of saving money in food stamps and school lunches and child nutrition, brought back hunger and malnutrition.

The tragedy is that, in its quest for "cheats" on the Social Security rolls, the Reagan team deprived many disabled of benefits and caused great suffering before most of the victims won their appeals.

The tragedy is that, as sociologists have documented for periods of high unemployment, the Reagan policies can fairly be said to have increased crime and delinquency, family break-ups, alcoholism and mental ill health.

And that was only the first half.

The farce now unfolding shows that very few ideas of substance were discussed in the locker room at halftime.

The farce got under way a little early when the idea that every family should adopt a family on welfare was followed by the proposal that

every employer hire one unemployed.

The farce picked up steam with the proposal to tax the unemployed but that was laughed off the agenda.

The farce continued, however, with the proposal to tax health benefits won by workers in negotiations. (See editorial on page 8.)

Then the farce took a strange twist with the revival of a subminimum wage for youth, a business favorite which studies show creates no jobs and in fact would displace the handicapped and learners now getting subminimum pay.

The farce unfolding also would dangle wage subsidies in front of employers even though a study of the New Jobs Tax Credit program reported employers as saying, "Orders determine the levels of hiring, not tax gimmicks!"

The farce also includes harebrained ideas like giving poor families vouchers to search for housing when housing is short and landlords are probably shrewder than the poor.

The farce becomes a little ridiculous when the President's chief economist promotes the idea of regressive consumption taxes to force savings for investment when that was what the 1981 tax cut giveaway was supposed to do.

The farce then turns bizarre when a "gang of 500" business leaders also urges consumption taxes, holding behind the facade of fairness to the poor, when many of these same groups benefited from the 1981 tax cut.

The President of the United States, meanwhile, is still reading the want ads. He told Chicago school kids that "scads of pages" of ads prove there are jobs going unfilled because people are not trained to fill them.

If Mr. Reagan had turned to the news pages or TV news, he would have learned that thousands of people lined up in the freezing cold for a handful of jobs in Milwaukee and Chicago.

In the depth of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal put 4 million people to work in two months. The WPA later put 3 million to work within a year.

But FDR and his New Deal had political imagination and will, compassion for people and confidence in the nation's ability to solve its problems.

International Union Trains TVA Shop Stewards

(Continued from page 1)

of benefits of OPEIU membership and signs them up.

Through role-playing exercises, discussions, films and lectures the stewards learned each aspect of the steward's job. They were taught at the Knoxville session by instructors from Tennessee State University's Learning Center, and at the Chattanooga and Muscle Shoals sessions by professors from the University of Alabama in Birmingham's Center for Labor Education and Research.

Four Locals Participate

Four OPEIU local unions represent the TVA members. They are Local 52 in Muscle Shoals, headed by President Phil Watkins; Local 119 in Chattanooga, headed by President Jeanne Farmer; Local 273 in Chattanooga, headed by President Jerry Jackson; and Local 268 in Knoxville, headed by President Dalton Cooper. It was these Local Union presidents who requested the training for their stewards.



OPEIU Local 119 President Jeanne Farmer.

Lowe Retires

(Continued from page 1)



William A. Lowe

and the western Canadian provinces. Then, in 1973, Lowe was chosen by the Executive Board to become the second secretary-treasurer in the Union's history. He was elected for his first full three-year term at the 1974 Convention.

"It is an office he has served ever since," said President John Kelly. "He has served the Union long and well. His contributions to this Union will never be forgotten."

Lowe may be best remembered by many OPEIU Locals as a primary promoter of the International's Voice of the Electorate program. Thanks partially to his efforts at educating and cajoling the Local officers and members, VOTE is now one of the healthiest and most influential political action fund's in the labor movement.



OPEIU Local 52 President Phil Watkins introduces International Representative Jon Heller to stewards in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Although the vast majority of stewards came from TVA facilities, stewards representing other OPEIU members and shops attended as well. A few of these included the Department of Energy and East Tennessee Baptist Hospital (Local 268) and the Coca-Cola Bottling Company (Local 179). Spencer Smith is the President of Local 179.

The Local Union presidents also requested training for themselves, to improve their own skills at leading and representing the members. Although a date has not yet been set, those classes will likely begin in March 1983. It will in all likelihood concentrate on communications skills, political action activities, recordkeeping, and gaining information from management.

International Representatives

The International Union was represented at the



Shop stewards listen to instructor explain the varied roles of the steward.

steward classes by Director of Organization Mark Reader, who addressed each session on TVA-OPEIU bargaining history and the need for training (see insert); Research Director Gwen Wells, who is responsible for OPEIU educational programs and who served as reporter and photographer at the classes; International Representative and Acting Director of TVA Jon Heller, who coordinates all four Local Unions in their dealings with TVA; and International Representative Bill Kirby, who is temporarily assisting the TVA local unions in representing their members.

OPEIU Stewards attending the training classes each received an OPEIU educational certificate. More important, they received instruction on improving skills to better enable them to serve their members.

Other OPEIU locals have been offered the same opportunity for training programs.

Wisconsin Paper Industry Members Now Average \$10.20 Per Hour

With conclusion of their new contract, OPEIU Local 95 members at Consolidated Paper Company will average \$10.20 per hour, reported Local Business Representative Steve Hartman. The more than 300 members at the Wisconsin papermaker, he said, will receive in excess of 15 percent in wage increases over the life of the two-year agreement.

Additional and extensive improvements were made, particularly in economic benefits. Just a few of these are:

- additional pay (50¢) per hour for working as replacements for supervisors;
- increased meal allowances;
- travel allowance for temporary assignment to an out-laying plant, equal to one-half of straight-time pay;
- an additional one-half day holiday on Good Friday;
- an increase in safety shoe allowance to \$30 in the first year and \$35 in the second;
- extended health insurance coverage to six months during layoff;
- increased life insurance coverage;
- increased accidental death and dismemberment;
- employer-paid safety glasses;
- increased maximum period for inpatient hospital stay to 80 days;
- increased retiree death benefit;
- increased major medical lifetime maximum to \$125,000;
- increased sickness and accident disability benefit to \$155 in the first year and \$160 in the second; and
- increased pension minimum monthly benefit.

In addition to all of the above, the Local made significant gains in improving contract language. Altogether they achieved an outstanding contract for their paper industry members.

Contributing to the successful negotiations, Hartman reports, were the negotiating committee members. They were Unit Chairman Myron Saeger; Local Vice President and Trustee Dick Neustifter; Local Trustee Frank Lasecke; and Members Dan Lorenzen, Dale Falkosky, John Polebitski, Rachel Ristow, and Denis Reese. Hartman assisted.

Local 494 Elects New Officers

"I have continued and reinforced appreciation and respect for all of us office workers. Don't EVER let anyone tell you you are not important to the smooth-running operation of a company, a bank, a union. They would all collapse without us," said Karen Porter—the new President of Local 494 in Detroit, Michigan.

When recently asked how she liked her job as Local President of a major International Union, Porter responded that it has been exciting, hectic and inspiring. She has been particularly inspired by American workers themselves and especially her own members. She said that office workers, maintenance workers, and crafts workers are what keeps this economy and this country humming. "We should be darn proud."

Porter also thanked her new Board members, who are "the glue that holds everything together." Those new officers are Vice President Sandie Brutman; Recording Secretary Cathy Binnington; Secretary-Treasurer Norine Rembowski; Trustees Margaret Hall, Sandy Naples and Paula Young; Board Members Mary Hawkins and Judy Trumbull; and Sergeant-at-Arms Sharon Fowler.

OPEIU Local Union Gains and Mid Canada Council Conferences— Focus on Microtechnology and S & H

OPEIU Canadian locals have long supported labor education for their members, staff and officers. Twice in the past year, the Mid Canada Council has held education conferences—in Thunder Bay and Marathon, Ontario—both with high attendance, reports Council Public Relations Director John Van Dyk.

Microtechnology

The first conference, held in May, concentrated on microtechnology, also known as automation or technological change. Doug Tobin, educational director of the Canadian Labour Congress, conducted the workshop which covered the various types of equipment used and their functions to basic contract language dealing with microtechnology and legislation to protect workers. Tobin urged the Council to form health and safety committees with a special focus on the impact of the new technology to our members' health. Taking his advice, the Council conducted their second conference on safety and health (see below).

Guest speaker for the conference, representing the Ontario Federation of Labour, was Frank Mazur. In addition to welcoming the delegates on behalf of the Federation, Mazur spoke at length on the soaring interest rates which have forced Canada into a recession and workers onto unemployment lines.

He also addressed the microtechnology issue. "According to U.S. estimates," he said, "45 percent of all jobs will be affected by this acceleration in automation, many times during the next 20 years. In Canadian terms this means that 5 to 6 million jobs could disappear or be drastically restructured before the end of the century. More than half of these will be unionized jobs. Yet, except for a few private conferences, neither the general public nor the trade unions seem to have taken much notice of it."

And, he illustrated the impact of the change on our members' worklives: increased loss of jobs, over-supervision to measure each worker's performance, the removal of individual initiative, pacing of work by machine rather than by the operator, the constant drive for speedup, decreased job skills and a resulting decrease in opportunities for promotion, and increased safety and health hazards.

Mazur concluded with a call for union action to protect their members. He said, "This is what we are being faced with in the next few years. People my



Pictured left-to-right at the Mid-Canada Conference are Ontario Federation of Labour Representative Frank Mazur, Mid-Canada Council President Mary Garbutt and Canadian Labour Council Education Director Doug Tobin.

age may not be affected to any great extent, but you—the younger people—most certainly will be. Are you aware? Do you understand? Do you care? What are you going to do about it?"

At the same spring meetings the Council elected new officers for the upcoming term. Those new officers are President Mary Garbutt, First Vice President Bill Dickerson, Second Vice President Larry Kopechanski, and Treasurer Gordon Boress.

Safety and Health

In November, the Mid Canada Council held its first conference dedicated to the issue of safety and health. Representatives from all local affiliates were invited to participate. Locals attending represented members in Marathon, Red Rock, Thunder Bay and Dryden, Ontario.

All aspects of the safety and health issue were addressed. Delegates discussed government legislation on health and safety and how it applied to their own locals. Health and safety problems associated with photocopying, video display terminals, lighting, air quality, and equipment were discussed.

B. Coley addressed the conference as guest speaker. Coley brought official greetings from the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Local 2 Wins \$400,000 and Bargaining Rights at D.C.'s Metro

The 200 transit employees have gained \$400,000 in retroactive raises, and an additional 300 workers have won bargaining rights at Washington, D.C.'s Transit Authority, commonly called Metro, reported Local 2 Business Manager and International Vice President Jim Sheridan.

The fight for the employees' right to be represented by Local 2 and to bargain collectively began in 1979. Following an organizing campaign and union election victory, Metro has fought to exclude 300 of the 500 members from bargaining, and to deny them their rights.

Finally, in July 1980, an arbitrator ruled that Metro was required to recognize the bargaining unit of 500 and to bargain collectively. The Authority has adamantly refused, and forced the union to go to federal court for enforcement of the arbitration award. That court ruled in favor of Local 2 and the transit employees, ordering Metro to reinstate wage increases and to bargain.

The dispute centered on Metro's contention that 300 of 500 employees placed in the bargaining unit (through a democratically run election) in 1980 were managers, supervisors or "confidential" employees

who should not be represented by the union.

Metro, however, granted the 300 disputed employees 7.7 percent cost-of-living raises in 1980, and 6.12 percent in October 1982.

The 200 employees that Metro recognized as covered by the union did not get raises, on the grounds that their wages were subject to collective bargaining. Metro did this despite the fact that such increases were a standing and long-existing policy at Metro, and at no time was Local 2 given the opportunity to bargain over the matter.

Sheridan said, "More than 13 months have passed since Local 2 filed its initial motion in U.S. District Court to preserve the rights of Metro employees to be represented by the union of their choice and to be protected from retaliation by Metro for exercising those rights. We believe it is now time that the Authority, in view of Judge Parker's rulings, recognize its responsibility and Local 2 as the bargaining representative for Metro employees in the agreed-upon bargaining units and enter immediately into good-faith negotiations to reach a fair and equitable contract. Local 2 and the Employee Negotiating Committee are prepared to meet with the Authority to resume negotiations at the earliest possible date."

Transit Employees Vote in Local 30

Radio Dispatchers at the Southern California Rapid Transit Authority (RTD) voted by nearly 70 percent for representation by OPEIU Local 30 in Los Angeles, reports International Representative Lee Brasted.

The radio dispatchers, however, are only the beginning, Brasted said; since other campaigns at RTD are already underway. Three groups of approximately 100 employees each have started their own organizing campaigns as a result of the recent vote. These units include division dispatchers, road supervisors and instructors.

Interestingly, Brasted reports, the radio dispatchers had been close to their employer and felt secure. Most of them earned more than \$30,000 per year with full fringe benefits. Late last year, however, the employer—without notice—lowered all dispatchers by several grades, thereby slashing their salaries. In addition, he increased the health and welfare deductibles from \$50 to \$200 and began a "new" evaluation program, far worse than the existing program.

"Employees who had worked for RTD for over 20 years finally realized that without a union contract anything can be changed at any time. Employees at RTD have realized that a union is needed as much to preserve the good things, as it is needed to improve on the deficient," Brasted concluded.

Local 179 Celebrates 35th Birthday



OPEIU Local 179 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, celebrated its 35th year of affiliation with the International Union. Local 179 represents members throughout private industry in companies such as the Mueller Company, U.S. Pipe & Foundry and Coca-Cola Bottling Company. OPEIU issued Local 179 its charter in 1947.

"It has been a rewarding and challenging 35 years," said Local President Spencer Smith. "Both the members and Local 179 have gained remarkably from our affiliation with the Office and Professional Employees International Union. We look forward to our next 35 years and to organizing additional white collar employees who will benefit from OPEIU membership."

At the celebration, three charter members—Pearl Graves, Beatrice Gass, and Gladys Follis—were awarded honorary lifetime membership cards, reports Smith.

Also present were members of the present executive board who are pictured above. They are (left to right) Business Representative Earl Brown; Trustee Edward Fleicher; Recording Secretary Gene Racz; Secretary-Treasurer Lois Jordan, Vice President Rebecca Huckabee; Trustee Peggy Gaddia; Sergeant-at-Arms Dolores McFadden; Board Member Ronnie Lawson; and President Spencer Smith.

Other Board members who were not present are Trustee David Phillips and Board Members Lisa Morris and Dwight Gardenhire.

Happy Birthday, Local 179!

★ Buy Union ★





Elections, Taxes and Resolutions

by John Kelly
International President

“Change the course” was the loud and clear message that the American voters delivered to the Reagan Administration on November 2.

People were fed up with escalating and unprecedented unemployment rates, record federal deficits, tax cuts for the rich, the weakening of occupational health standards, undermining of prevailing wage laws—and the abandonment of compassion for the needy and aged.

In record numbers, trade unionists worked to elect our friends and the friends of all working Americans, and to defeat our enemies. OPEIU members can be particularly proud of their achievement—their long hours working for candidates and at the polls, their efforts to register new voters, their unselfish contributions to Voice of the Electorate. Your money and time was well spent.

The figures prove how important such involvement is; they show how successful our program to elect progressive candidates has been.

In the race for the U.S. House of Representatives, OPEIU contributed financial support to 43 candidates and had a 65 percent success rate. We elected such pro-people candidates as Pepper in Florida, Frost in Texas, Burton in California, Bouquard in Tennessee, Kostmayer in Pennsylvania, O'Neill in Massachusetts, Dyson in Maryland, and Moody in Wisconsin.

This was an extremely important election for us. The President, who up to that point had run roughshod over the Congress, now faces a new Congress where the Democrats have a 100-vote majority. This will force the Administration to negotiate with a branch of Congress, effectively controlled by the opposition party. You have already seen such negotiations on the new jobs bill proposals. No longer will the Administration be able to railroad through legislation that hurts the majority of the American public—the non-rich.

We can also be proud of our achievement in the Senate, although there was no shift of power in that branch. OPEIU contributed to 13 Senatorial races and had a 55 percent success rate. We helped elect candidates such as Metzenbaum of Ohio, Sasser of Tennessee, Sarbanes of Maryland, and Jackson of Washington.

We were even more successful in races for governorships, where 60 percent of our candidates were elected. High on the list of successes were Cuomo in New York, White in Texas, Anaya in New Mexico, and Blanchard in Michigan.

Although we know these elected candidates will not vote “our way” on every issue, we know they are more progressive than their opponents, that they support programs for working people, the elderly and poor. And, because we contributed heavily to their campaigns, they know who we are and are willing to listen to our point of view—even if they do not always support it.

But, we cannot become complacent after our victories. There is still a powerful conservative coalition, reduced though it may be in numbers. But, it can be overcome by a coalition of progressive Democrats and Republicans, who read the lesson of this election as a call to change course—a demand for jobs and justice. It can be overcome in 1984 when we elect more of our friends and defeat our enemies.

An Unheeding Administration

The Administration apparently is deaf. In spite of the message from the election, it continues on its course of gouging the American working people, while easing the burdens on the rich. The President, in error his advisors say, called for elimination of all corporate taxes. At the same time, his Administration has proposed to tax workers' health insurance benefits. Although he has withdrawn the first proposal, the second is still being advanced.

OPEIU is convinced that this plan to tax workers for a good part of health care benefits paid by em-

ployers is simply another way of victimizing workers and their families.

Such a tax would reduce health care coverage, do nothing to control soaring medical costs; and it represents an unnecessary government intrusion into the collective bargaining process.

Specifically, the proposal calls for placing a limit on tax-free employer contributions to the health insurance coverage of their workers. Currently, employers can deduct this cost as a business expense, yet it is not considered part of a worker's taxable income.

Whatever Happened To Corporate Taxes?

President Reagan's recent off-the-cuff statement that corporate income taxes are "hard-to justify" touched off a mini-storm, and the administration backed away. But the fact is, corporate taxes seem to be on the way out, anyway.

In fiscal 1977, the corporate tax provided 15.44 percent of federal revenue. In fiscal 1982 the percentage slumped to 7.97, thanks to Reagan tax changes in 1981. This amount, too, will diminish in the years ahead.

Many firms, which take shrewd advantage of tax breaks, already pay nothing to the government. The 46 percent statutory rate is a laughing stock for almost all businesses with income over \$100,000. The big oil companies for years, even with enormous profits, have been paying a lower percentage than individuals earning \$10-15,000.

The scheme being pushed by the Administration and some of its supporters in Congress would cap the amount an employer could pay in tax-free coverage. Workers would be required to pay income taxes on employer payments beyond the specified ceiling.

It is an inequitable way to raise revenues. It would also disrupt labor-management relations by forcing the reopening of agreements and unduly influencing future negotiations.

Besides meddling in collective bargaining, the proposed tax scheme would penalize workers in areas where medical costs are higher and discriminate against employees in groups with large numbers of older workers.

The tax would actually lead to a loss of insurance for many employees, who would be under pressure to choose lower cost, minimal coverage health plans. Workers would also be discouraged from joining health maintenance organizations and from obtaining preventive care, diagnostic services and early retirement.

Workers who over the years have sacrificed other fringe benefits to maintain adequate health coverage for their families would find themselves owing Uncle Sam money at tax time to maintain their hard-earned collectively bargained rights. The big winners would

be their employers who would no longer have to pay the full cost of bargained health insurance.

The supporters of the scheme assert that the tax will control soaring medical costs. This theory, however, ignores the fact that the medical care market is dominated by doctors, not consumers. After the patient makes the initial decision to seek care, the demand for medical services—hospitalization, laboratory tests and diagnostic services, for example—is strictly in the hands of the doctor, not the patient.

This incredibly inequitable proposal only emphasizes the need for concerted action to persuade members of Congress to vote against the bill, the need to continue to elect our friends to the House and Senate, and the need to defeat this regressive Administration in 1984.

1983 OPEIU Convention

OPEIU is nearing another International Convention. This year our triennial convention will be held June 5-10, 1983. As we approach that time, it is important that we reflect on the purpose of such meetings and on ways in which to make them more successful, more relevant to our membership.

Labor unions are democratic institutions. Officers and convention delegates are elected by the rank-and-file members to represent them and their interests in both the union and the workplace. They also over the years have rightly come to expect the Union to represent them effectively in electoral politics.

The convention is the supreme governing body of the Union. It is the convention that elects International officers and that sets policy for OPEIU for the three years following. With each vote the delegates build a platform of ideals and goals for OPEIU and its members. It is not a time for intellectual exercises or for esoteric resolutions.

OPEIU seeks to implement all resolutions passed by the delegates. For that reason, the resolutions must be pragmatic, attainable, and in the best interests of all our members.

No local union should propose resolutions to obtain changes in domestic and foreign policy if that local has not participated in the Voice of the Electorate program or in state, local and national politics.

It is too easy for a local to give lip service to resolutions—progressive and conservative—without also committing resources that will enable the International to see them implemented.

I have spent much time at conventions watching delegates debate resolutions of little or no concern to our members, resolutions with little if any impact on their lives, and resolutions impossible to obtain because of insufficient resources.

In 1983 I would hope that we could put aside such debates and get on to the business of representing our members. I know that all of our locals and their delegates will work with me to attain this goal.

U.S. Price Index

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

1981	
August	276.5
September	279.1
October	279.7
November	280.4
December	281.1
1982	
January	282.1
February	282.9
March	282.5
April	284.3
May	287.1
June	290.6
July	291.8
August	292.4
September	292.8
October	293.6
November	293.2
December	292.0
1983	
January	292.1

Canadian Index[†]

Statistics Canada
New Base 1981 = 100

1981	
September	102.3
October	103.3
November	104.2
December	104.7
1982	
January	105.4
February	106.7
March	108.0
April	108.6
May	110.1
June	111.2
July	111.8
August	112.3
September	112.9
October	113.6
November	114.4
December	114.4
1983	
January	114.1

[†] Effective with the release of the January 1983 Index, the official time base for the Canadian CPI has been converted from 1971 = 100 to 1981 = 100. All figures — 1981 through 1983 — have been converted to this new base, for your information.

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

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