

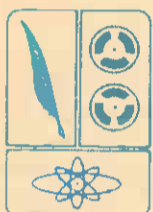
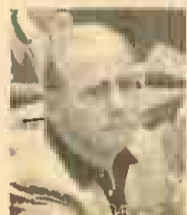
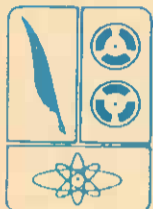


# WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 410

July-September 1983



**When No Others Cared ...  
We Were There.**



## CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

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### Committees

# Holding It All Together



*The Constitution and Laws Committee, chaired by Vice President J. B. Moss, recommended amendments to the OPEIU International Constitution. Examples included an innovative dues structure, expanded Strike and Defense Fund, and changes in disciplinary procedures.*



*Vice President Fred Trotter chaired the Publications Committee. That committee recommended changes and improvements to all OPEIU official publications including White Collar and the OPEIU Research News.*



*The Resolutions Committee was chaired by Vice President Gary Kirkland. It recommended for delegate consideration and action resolutions on video display terminals, new technology, staff and officers training, among others.*



*The Rules Committee, chaired by Vice President Gwen Newton, set the ground rules for the OPEIU International Convention. For example, it recommended all rules on delegate credentials, debate, speeches and elections.*



*Vice President Kathleen Kinnick chaired the Legislative Committee, which recommended major legislative targets for the union. Examples include unemployed health coverage, women's rights, plant closings and domestic relief programs.*



*The Officer Reports Committee recommended acceptance or rejection of the President's, Secretary-Treasurer's and/or Executive Board Reports. It was chaired by Carolyn Combs, OPEIU Local 391 Secretary-Treasurer.*



*The Organizing Committee's responsibility to recommend organizing targets (such as insurance and banking) and strategies for winning campaigns to OPEIU delegates was overseen by Vice President Harvey Markusen.*



*Vice President Billie Adams chaired the Public Relations Committee, which recommended improvements in OPEIU's public relations and publicity policies.*

**Preconvention****Delegates Deliberate and Educate**

International President John Kelly addresses Canadian delegates. Left-to-right he is flanked by Secretary-Treasurer Roméo Corbeil, Vice Presidents Gilles Beauregard and William Wittal.

Sunday, June 5, U.S. and Canadian delegations met separately in deliberations, followed by an afternoon of educational workshops.

International President John Kelly, opened the Canadian session. He pointed out the similarities between the two countries, especially in terms of anti-union and regressive legislative and economic policies. "No one believed it could happen in Canada. But, now you have legislatively imposed federal wage rates that are woefully inadequate; right-to-work legislation is being discussed seriously; the right for the B.C. Labour Board to arbitrarily cancel certifications and merge units of different unions has been established; and the union-busting consultants are flourishing," he pointed out to the delegates.

"And, I needn't tell you," he continued, "the similarities in the anti-people, anti-union Trudeau and Reagan economic policies, which have left millions unemployed, hundreds of thousands unable to buy homes or automobiles, and countless poor, aged and disabled without the social services they need to survive."

"In both countries we must vigorously oppose such policies. We must develop and coordinate our strategies, since clearly economic and legislative policies in the industrial countries has assumed an international flavor. And, we must be vigilant to detect adverse policies that could flow in either direction across our borders. Together I know we can reverse this reactionary trend in both nations, if together we are willing to work hard and to fight, to mobilize our members to fight," Kelly concluded.

When Kelly had finished, Romeo Corbeil led the delegates in a discussion of problems, specific to Canada, the delegates had faced. Strategies that had worked, or had such potential, were debated.

Research Director Gwen Wells opened the U.S. session, but quickly turned it over to Attorney Amy Gladstein for a discussion of the development of the duty of fair representation (DFR) since the 1980 Convention. Gladstein outlined changes in the law that affect local unions' obligations to represent fairly all members of the bargaining unit in the grievance and arbitration procedures.

The session examined in detail the state of the law with respect to the substantive definition of DFR, as well as recent decisions on the assessment of damages for a union's breach of the duty and on time limits for filing federal suits. Locals were given advice on how both to represent their members in a non-arbitrary or discriminatory fashion, while at the same time protecting themselves from liabilities.

**Joint Education Workshops**

Following their separate sessions, Canadian and United States delegates chose between three workshops, which occurred simultaneously. All three focused on issues of major concern to our union on both sides of the border.

**Union-Busting: A Canadian Perspective** dealt with the international varieties of union busting with a focus on the particular problems in Canada and the U.S. Discussions were led by David Bennett, Health & Safety National Representative, Research & Programme Development, Canadian Labour Congress Education and Studies Centre.

Participants looked at union-busting attempts through media propaganda and legislative change; the use of scabs, strikebreakers and union-busting consultants; quality-of-worklife programs and "positive

industrial relations." Led by Bennett, participants also discussed the warning signs of an employer's union-busting drive and a program of action for "fighting back."

**Equal Pay for Comparable Worth: A Bargaining and Organizing Issue for the 1980s** was led by Ellen Wernick, Executive Director of the Center for Education and Research, Coalition of Labor Union Women. The workshop and participants examined the causes of the wage gap between men and women's jobs, defined the concept of "pay equity," and examined the strategies and activities of unions and other organizations to end sex-based wage discrimination.

**Microtechnology: Its Impact on Jobs, Workers and the Union** workshop was led by Economist Mark Roberts of the AFL-CIO Economic Research Department. Roberts said, "A technological revolution is now occurring throughout the workplaces of Canada and the United States. The result is that frequently the office is appearing to look more and more like assembly-line operations and is beginning to experience the same problems: job loss, high production standards, boredom, fatigue, deskilled jobs, fewer promotion opportunities, and safety and health hazards." The workshop, therefore, examined the effects of these changes on workers and the Union and the strategies to combat the adverse impacts.

Delegates were pleased with the educational program, indicating that they were taking additional expertise for problem solving back to their local unions. They also praised the opportunity they were given to share with each other their common problems and possible solutions.



Labor Attorney Amy Gladstein addresses U.S. delegates on their duty of fair representation.

**Blues Delegates Convene**

On Saturday, June 4, prior to the convention opening 23 delegates representing members at Blue Cross/Blue Shield units, or seeking to represent such employees, met to discuss problems and issues in their specific company and industry.

With Local 32 Business Manager Pat Tully leading discussions, delegates shared information on threats, and particular needs they had.

Issues of specific concern included automation, work measurement, job evaluation, organizing potentials and problems, smoking versus non-smoking areas in worksites, alcohol and drug abuse programs, and collective bargaining language.

The following local unions had representatives in attendance: Locals 3 (San Francisco); 5 (Denver); 6 (Boston); 8 (Seattle); 9 (Milwaukee); 23 (Tacoma, WA); 29 (Oakland); 32 (Newark, NJ); 57 (Montreal); and 153 (New York City). The International was represented by Director of Organization Mark Reader, Director of Research Gwen Wells, and International Representatives Lee Brasted and Mike Walker.

It was agreed that the next scheduled Blues Conference will occur in conjunction with the 1984 Full-Time Staff Training Conference. A date, time and location is yet to be determined.



# Make No Small Plans for OPEIU

by John Kelly  
International President

At our 16th Triennial Convention, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue challenged the delegates to "make no small plans for this union." He spoke of the shift to service and white collar occupations, the fact that OPEIU was there representing and organizing white collar workers for many, many years, that OPEIU should be the dominant trade union in this burgeoning white collar workforce.

He also credited the administration for the Union's growth. We were one of only six unions in the AFL-CIO that experienced growth in the last several years. But, like Donahue said, "it ain't impressive enough."

OPEIU should have had 10 times the growth that was recorded since the last Convention. It was clear that that was what the delegates believed as well.

But, as Donahue and others pointed out: it won't be easy. It needs careful planning and strong leadership. It needs a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

### How to Meet the Challenge

It means more technical expertise and education on issues like comparable worth and automation. It means more and better quality representation. It means a greater understanding of union-busting strategies, a willingness to fight for white collar workers through the board and courts. It means competing against every other union—all of whom are losing members and, therefore, have turned to the growing white collar workforce.

It means escalating our fight for legislation that protects the rights of working men and women. It means protecting and improving our bargaining positions through additional staff and high quality education for staff, officers and members. But nothing protects that bargaining position more than the organization of more employers within the company and industry.

The bottom line, as Tom Donahue so aptly put it: It won't be cheap. Staff, education, legislation, technical and legal expertise, organizing—all cost money. But, if we want to be tougher and harder, we have to make the union capable of waging the fight.

To accept the challenge of doing so and becoming the dominant union for white collar workers, more money for the International and the locals was essential. Your delegates to the International Convention unanimously recognized that fact and voted the increase you find inserted here.

Even with this new increase, OPEIU will have one of the lowest per capita tax schedules of any international union.

Although no one enjoys asking for or paying more money, it's time for us to face the uncomfortable facts of life: In this increasingly anti-union environment, where every union competes for the same pool of workers, we will either grow or we will die. We either have the expertise and resources to effectively represent our members, or we lose those members.

We either accept that we are a movement and that our primary goal is to improve the conditions of life for working people, including the unorganized. Or,

we cease being a movement and lose our reason for existence.

We make "no small plans for this union." And, in reaching for the grand we passed the dues and per capita tax increases you have before you.

"When no others cared, we were there" is a wonderful theme. It's meaningless if we aren't there. Because we plan to be around for a long time to wage the good fight for our members, the delegates showed they cared by granting the money to the International to make it all possible.

## Convention Mourns Departed

In an inspiring emotional candlelight vigil, delegates bowed their heads in remembrance of OPEIU members, officers and staff who have died during the last three years. Below, International Secretary-Treasurer Roméo Corbeil read the names of the deceased.



## Entering the Eighties

To bring OPEIU into the 1980s as an organization with the ability to fight for our members and to organize effectively, the delegates to the 16th Triennial Convention adopted an entirely new concept in dues structure. The following is a summary of the program the delegates passed unanimously:

The dues of all local unions must be increased a minimum of one dollar (\$1.00) in each of the next three (3) years. If a local has already increased its dues this year an average of one dollar per member per month, then they do not have to increase dues again this year—1983.

Increases in per capita taxes must be paid as follows:

Effective October 1, 1983

1 to 500 members . . . . . 90¢+10¢=\$1.00

Over 500 members . . . . . 40¢+10¢=\$ .50  
Effective October 1, 1984

1 to 500 members . . . . . 40¢+10¢=\$ .50

Over 500 members . . . . . 15¢+10¢=\$ .25

Effective October 1, 1985

1 to 500 members . . . . . 40¢+10¢=\$ .50

Over 500 members . . . . . 15¢+10¢=\$ .25

In addition, the Strike Fund has been changed to a Strike and Defense Fund. Strike benefits are increased annually and local unions with public sector membership may apply for benefits, such as legal costs, in order to defend their members.

More detailed descriptions of dues and per capita tax increases may be obtained from your local unions or the International office.

### U.S. Price Index

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

1982	
January	282.1
February	282.9
March	282.3
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
February	292.3
March	293.0
April	294.9
May	296.3
June	297.2

### Canadian Index\*

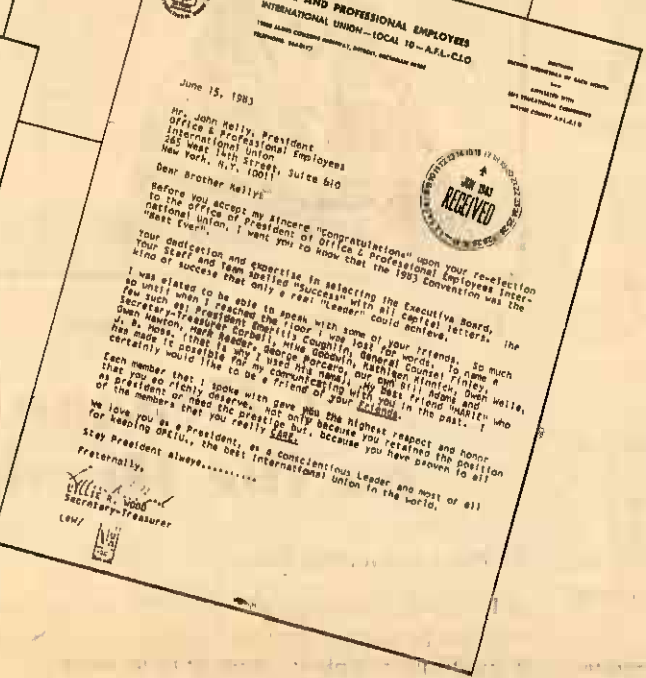
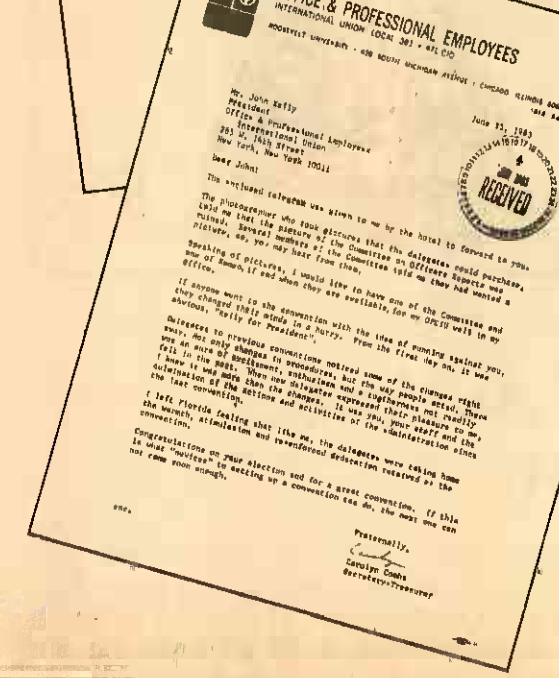
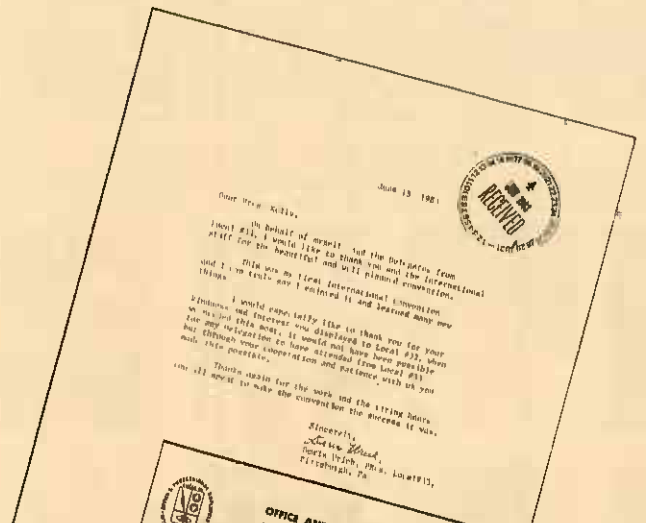
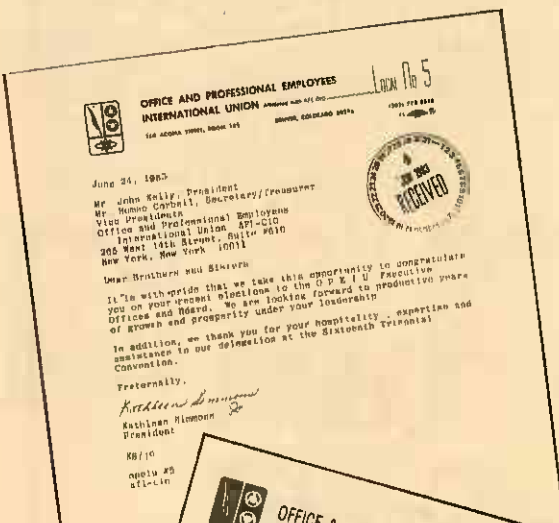
Statistics Canada  
New Base 1981 = 100

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
February	114.6
March	115.8
April	115.8
May	116.1
June	117.4

\*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: Roméo Corbeil, Sec.-Treas., 815 16th Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, D.C. 20006.

# Delegates Praise Convention, Note Progress and Leaders



## A Very Special Letter

Dear President Kelly,  
I just wanted to take a few minutes to write and let you know how much I appreciated the OPEIU Convention.

I had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people and learn so much. Since this was the first convention of any type that I have attended, I was a little frightened at first. But, thanks to you and your wonderful staff, I soon found I was among friends.

I considered it an honor to be a delegate from Local 268 and hope I represented them well.

Since my return home I have taken the position of Chief Job Steward at East Tennessee Baptist Hospital and started work on my first grievance yesterday. . . .

Since I have been back to work for two days, I have preached only one sermon. An LPN, who works 3:00-11:00 on my floor (and who no one has been able to get into the Union since it was formed), worked with me last night. . . . I had discussed the Union with her before I left for the Convention. Last night I had the opportunity to tell her about our Gospel of OPEIU, and I am glad to say this sister saw the light and was saved. When we left the hospital last night at 11:15 p.m., she was a member of OPEIU Local 268. . . .

Maybe there's hope for some of the wayward children after all.

I may not stand too tall at only 5 feet, and I may not have a lot of fancy degrees after my name, but I have always believed if anything's worth having it's worth fighting for. And, I am going down fightin', if I go down.

I hope in some way I can help Local 268 and the International to grow, so that some day there won't be such a thing as a "Right to Work State."

Like Judy Hutcheson said when she spoke to the Convention, women in the South are taught to be soft, delicate, loving and gracious. But, I don't feel we have to give any of these things up to be women who want to make this country a better place to live.

With men like yourself and your wonderful staff to help lead us and this country, I feel we will win the battle.

Again, thank you for being there "when no others cared."

Sincerely,  
**Phyllis Rasor**  
Local 268  
Knoxville, TN

# SOLIDARITY DAY III



health and safety, education and all the other issues that affect working men and women in America. But, this is more than a single happening on a single day of the year. Our task in planning and building Labor Day 1983 events is to create an impressive display of trade union strength on Labor Day and to do so in a way that builds an organization that will maintain that strength.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that OPEIU local unions participate and that all of our members participate as members of OPEIU.

Although our name and your local number should be prominently displayed on any signs, t-shirts, caps, etc., the AFL-CIO has asked that it be used around the overall theme and be printed in the PMS 293 color (your printer will understand that designation).

We look forward to receiving your stories and pictures on your involvement in Solidarity Day III events.

### Kelly Heads Minneapolis Agenda

The AFL-CIO has requested that the International Presidents of its affiliates headline the Labor Day festivities in major cities across the nation.

Our own International President John Kelly will kick off the day with a keynote address to the thousands of trade unionists in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The address will occur in the early morning at a breakfast meeting, which begins the Labor Day celebrations.

A report of that speech will appear in the next issue of *White Collar*.

This Labor Day 1983 we will be heard in every state in the nation.

There will be parades, rallies and marches in small towns and big cities. Those who don't have a celebration in their community will travel to join their brothers and sisters in nearby places.

In some states, this will be a single major event; while others will have a number of Labor Day rallies.

All of these activities on Solidarity Day III—Labor Day 1983—will be united around the common theme of:

**"Across America—We Will Be Heard"**

And, we will be heard that day on jobs, trade,

## WHITE COLLAR

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

**JOHN KELLY** President  
**ROMEO CORBEIL** Secretary-Treasurer

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Managing Editor



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Work and Health  
by Press Associates, Inc.

## Accidents: Who's to Blame?

by Phillip L. Polakoff, M.D.

The so-called "accident-prone worker" is a scapegoat often trotted out to stall effective safety measures. But an accident—in many cases—is not the result of clumsiness or momentary lapse of attention. It could be the conclusion of a long string of contributing factors.

Dr. Stephen Zoloth and David Michaels, MPH, occupational health specialists at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, pinpointed such factors in a special safety issue of Occupational Health Nurse magazine. They included: Heat, noise, lighting, toxins, improper training, inexperience, fatigue, shift, variability of tasks performed, speed of work, and the type of production incentives used.

One study cited by the two specialists, for example, showed that accidents increased 25 percent with every 5 degrees Fahrenheit rise or fall from an optimal temperature mediated by humidity, airflow and acclimatization.

Instead of putting the blame on the victims, perhaps we should look more closely at the "accident prone workplace."

These places where accidents are waiting to happen are not only in hot and heavy industries. Let's look at the health care industry itself. Surely, one might expect, that scrubbed-down, starched-up environment should be free of risks for employees. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

Dr. Jeanne Stellman, writing in the same safety issue of Occupational Health Nurse, cited excessive accident rates among nurses and kitchen workers. A recent survey of one medical center, she says, found that nurses accounted for 60 percent of reported accidents, although they represented only 33 percent of the workforce. Kitchen workers, who comprised only 10 percent of the workforce reported 19 percent of the accidents.

Dr. Stellman, who was editor of the special issue of the nurses' journal, is executive director of the Women's Occupational Health Resource Center (WOHRC), School of Public Health at Columbia University in New York.

Among hazards she listed are needlestick wounds which can allow infections to invade the body, injuries from lifting, improper storage of chemicals in laboratories and inadequate staff training.

Hospitals also get a going over from Patricia Cayo Sexton, author of "The New Nightingales: Hospital Workers, Unions, and New Women's issues," published last year by Enquiry Press, New York.

As one hospital aide told the author: "In an eight-hour day, an aide lifts about 3,000 pounds. She gives maybe 20 baths in the morning and lifts more than a man in an auto assembly plant. That's why her back goes."

Sexton is professor of sociology at New York University and a trade unionist. Her research, sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women, is based on interviews with national and local union leaders, management, and women workers in hospitals in California and Pennsylvania.

Here's another excerpt from her book on the subject of on-the-job health and safety from a hospital worker's viewpoint:

"People get toxic reactions from the gas used in sterilizers. Administrators like to talk about all the protection gear they'll give the workers, but they never talk about changing the kind of gas used so workers won't need protection."

Running like a dark thread through these observations about job hazards in the health care industry—traditionally top-heavy with women workers—is stress.

Job stress is not unique in this industry. It plays a major role in accidents and general health everywhere. Working under stress for short bursts may improve performance. But prolonged stress takes its toll in such complaints as headaches, insomnia, gastrointestinal disorders and many more.

Burdened with these uncomfortable, potentially harmful distractions, workers may have more accidents. But they are not necessarily "accident-prone." The workplace and work practices may be the real culprits.

Members with a question on occupational safety and health or have a topic which they would like to see covered in this column are encouraged to write to the International Union, c/o the Research Department.

## THE AMERICAN DREAM...

JOB,  
HOME,  
CAR!!



## THE AMERICAN RUDE AWAKENING...

UNEMPLOYMENT,  
FORECLOSURE,  
REPOSSESSION!!



HUCK

### Washington Window

## The Reaganite Assault on the Disabled

By Press Associates, Inc.

In 1980, Congress amended the Social Security Act to require periodic reviews to determine if disability recipients were able to work.

It probably seemed like a good idea at the time because the Social Security trust funds were in trouble and the Social Security Administration's estimated \$218 million savings from such a move smelled so sweet.

But when the Reagan Administration took office in 1981, the sweet smell must have seemed like a river of honey after an intense campaign against so-called cheaters receiving federal program benefits.

The Administration seized on a 1981 General Accounting Office report that one out of five people on disability were ineligible to justify its all-out pursuit of "cheaters" on disability rolls.

Before the Reagan Administration, the SSA had conducted about 155,000 disability reviews a year. In Fiscal 1982, 497,000 reviews were conducted. In Fiscal 1983, 377,000 reviews took place through the end of May.

The reviews have kicked some 374,000 persons off the disability rolls since March 1981, with some 88,000 restored after appeals. The Administration has said the terminations will save about \$2.7 billion—123 times the amount anticipated by Congress.

Behind the numbers and the guise of searching out abuse of the disability system, there lies, as Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton said, "a cost-control program without regard to human consequences."

Massachusetts State Senator Jack Backman, who chairs the state's Special Commission on Social Security Disability, recently described for a House Select Committee on Aging panel the "outrageous manner" in which the reviews were conducted.

Disability beneficiaries selected for reviews were notified by letter that they had 10 days to send in medical proof of the disability. Even if the disabled managed to get physicians' reports within that limited time, Backman said, "the reports of the personal physicians were ignored in any event."

"The disabled persons were sent by the Social Security Administration to consulting physicians,

some of whom made over \$100,000 per year, on a part-time basis, who gave as many as 30 exams or more per day. Many of the physicians were not specialists in the particular disability that they were reviewing," Backman said.

But there's more. Backman said the Massachusetts Commission found that the SSA ignored federal court decisions in their review process, that the person making the review decision had no actual contact with the recipient and that the doctors making termination recommendations often did not examine the patients.

The process, Backman said, led to terminations of a person with cerebral palsy with both arms in braces, a blind person recuperating from a series of stomach operations and a man with one leg and an abscessed lung who received his termination notice in his hospital bed.

Other horror stories from the House Aging panel hearing and other hearings during the last year abound. There were accounts of disabled persons committing suicide and others dying from stress-induced heart attacks after termination. There were reports of mental patients on disability who were incapable of understanding the 10 days' notice letter and were terminated.

But these tragedies did little to soften the Administration's position until it faced a major political embarrassment.

Roy P. Benavidez, a former Green Beret who was awarded the Medal of Honor for valor in combat by President Reagan in February 1981, had his benefits terminated. He was told he was able to work despite two pieces of shrapnel in his heart, "severely impaired" arms and legs and a punctured lung.

Suddenly, officials of an Administration beset by an image of "unfairness" and blaming an "inherited" review system announced they would make changes which would make disability reviews more "humane."

However, testimony from state officials familiar with the suffering caused by the disability review process agreed the Administration's reforms are too late and too little.

Since Congress began a review process which has been perverted into a budget cut crusade by the Administration, it has a responsibility to ensure that any changes made are constructive and treat the disabled like human beings.

# Charting a Course of Progress



OPEIU International President John Kelly leads delegates in their deliberations.

OPEIU delegates debated and approved many major policy resolutions at the June convention. Those resolutions ranged from a defense of women's rights to protecting workplace safety and health, from helping unemployed workers to support of Solidarity Day III, from a strong recommitment to organizing the unorganized to training OPEIU officers, staff and members.

Together, these resolutions set the course for the International Union for the next three years. They direct OPEIU's policy in the political arena, in labor relations affairs, and in terms of a legislative agenda.

Following is a summary of a few of the major resolutions adopted by vote of convention delegates. All local unions will receive complete texts of resolutions in the Convention proceedings, or individual resolutions can be requested from the OPEIU Research Department.

## Reaganomics

In a strong condemnation of Reagan's economic policies, the delegates said that the present administration had directly and adversely affected "retired workers, working families and our children, the future workers and families of North America, failing to provide leadership and responsible government action designed to stimulate the economy and eliminate un-



Vice President Emeritus Frank Morton swears in OPEIU's International Executive Board.

employment." They called on the administration to reduce the high interest rates which restrict consumer purchasing power to reduce taxes on working families "through a restructured tax program aimed at equal taxes for all, including big business." And they committed the OPEIU, its delegates and local unions to actively promoting all measures necessary to strengthen the economy, including full employment and worker retraining programs.

## Unemployed Health Coverage

Citing double-digit unemployment figures and the lengthy average duration of unemployment, delegates noted that the majority of unemployed workers and

their families are left vulnerable for long periods without health coverage. They also noted that "the ultimate responsibility for ensuring an adequate level of health care for all Americans rests with the federal government."

They, therefore, resolved that OPEIU "work to secure the necessary authorizing legislation and appropriations to assure health insurance coverage and health services for unemployed workers and their families" and "that such health insurance coverage be above and beyond unemployment insurance." Finally, they committed OPEIU to fight for "the only way to assure all Americans access to quality health care they can afford"—universal comprehensive national health insurance.

## Plant Closings

"Corporate plant, store and office closings, and the shutdown of federal facilities by the government are increasing at an alarming rate. These high level decisions have already devastated the lives of literally millions of workers" and communities. So began OPEIU's resolution on plant closings. In order to protect communities and workers from the decimation of unannounced closings, the resolution called for strong support for legislation requiring advance notice to communities and workers, severance pay, continua-

tion of health programs, retraining programs and company contributions to a community readjustment program.

## Domestic Relief Program

To provide additional relief for the unemployed, numbering in the millions, and to get America back to work, delegates outlined a far-reaching program. The delegates demanded, in summary, a comprehensive federal unemployment insurance plan, an emergency public works act to provide up to 15 million new jobs at union wages, a national youth training and education act, federally outlawed compulsory overtime, and a comprehensive federal health care

system, with inclusion of strict anti-discrimination and pro-affirmative action provisions in all of the above.

## Taxation of Fringe Benefits

Delegates indicated strong opposition to any attempt to tax the fringe benefits of workers, including the administration-backed H.R. 2574 to tax health care benefits. They condemned such legislation as an intrusion into the collective bargaining process, noted it would lead to a loss of insurance for those least able to afford additional coverage, and committed OPEIU to work with coalitions of other unions and progressive organizations to fight any and all such efforts.

## Acid Rain

Noting that many industries had returned to coal because of the increasing cost of gas and oil and because of the Reagan administration's relaxation of environmental controls on coal-fired industrial plants and generating stations, delegates opposed any unregulated increase in the use of coal, which may contribute to acid rain.

They resolved that the union would strongly urge federal, provincial and state governments to introduce meaningful legislation to curb and control this serious threat to our health, welfare and livelihoods." They also committed OPEIU to urging the Canadian and U.S. governments to investigate alternative energy sources and energy-producing facilities with less environmental impact.

## Solidarity Day III

To mobilize rank-and-file OPEIU members, staff and officers to achieve the stated legislative and bargaining goals, the delegates committed OPEIU and its locals to full and complete support of Solidarity Day III—an AFL-CIO-sponsored series of events, rallies and marches on Labor Day 1983. Solidarity Day III begins the mobilization for the 1984 election when the entire labor movement has committed seeking election of the national and state legislators who embrace progressive pro-people legislation.

## Organizing

A firmer resolve and recommitment to organizing the unorganized workers and to bring them the benefits of OPEIU representation was a primary goal of the OPEIU delegates. In their resolution on organizing, the delegates recognized OPEIU as "the dominant union for white collar, professional and technical employees"—the union that cared, when no others were there. In addition, they passed resolutions urging a special commitment to the organization of white-collar workers in the insurance, banking, and electronic industries. Banking and insurance were targeted because of the extremely low wages and working conditions prevalent there, and because OPEIU has extensive experience as the dominant white-collar union in both. High-tech was chosen as a target because of its fast growth as a non-union sector of the economy.

## Women's Rights

The delegates recognized the wage gap between men and women, resulting largely from sex-segregated jobs. And, through the resolution entitled "Equal Pay

for Work of Comparable Value," they called on the local unions to "work to attain equality of jobs of comparable worth in all bargaining units" through bargaining to upgrade undervalued job classifications and initiating pay equity studies to identify and resolve disparities. The resolution adds that "OPEIU will take all other appropriate action to bring about true equality in pay for work performed and will work to remove all barriers to equal opportunity for women.

In further action to protect the rights of women and to guarantee equal treatment under the law, the



Delegates listen to arguments for and against resolutions.

delegates unanimously passed resolutions of strong support for the Equal Rights Amendment and the Economic Equity Act. In the former delegates went on record "supporting the reintroduction of the Equal Rights Amendment and its submission to the states for ratification." In addition, they called on local unions to "elect state and national legislators who will seek and actively work for passage of the ERA." In the latter resolution, the delegates sought to further assure equality of economic opportunity for both men and women by going on record in support of H.R. 2090, the Economic Equity Act.



Delegates enjoy setting policy for the International Union.

Last, sexual harassment was identified as a "common recurring problem of working women" that has, in fact, been prohibited under Title VII. Although protected under law, the delegates found that "collective bargaining and the grievance procedure provide the most logical structures for ensuring that working conditions include an environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation." They, therefore, strongly urged all locals to recognize sexual harassment as a "term and condition of employment" and to "examine their present contract language on discrimination to determine whether it is adequate to deal with this issue." They further committed the International Union to additional educational programs for members, stewards and staff in order to inform and sensitize them on the impacts of sexual harassment in the workplace.

### Safety and Health

For the second convention in a row, delegates voiced concern for the health impacts of video display terminals on OPEIU members and all white-collar workers. The resolution passed identified visual, musculo-skeletal and mental stress, and potential radiation hazards. In addition to urging strong contract language to regulate machine usage—rest breaks, eye exams, ergonomically designed furniture and lighting, regular maintenance and radiation testing, and transfer of pregnant workers with no loss in benefits or pay—the delegates voiced strong support for locals to "work strenuously for federal, provincial and state legislation embodying this same health protection; since no member should be required to trade wages and fringes in bargaining for a safe and healthy work environment."

# Caring Friends Address Delegates

## Tom Donahue Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO

"We've seen a continual revitalization of and recommitment to the labor movement. It began with Solidarity Day.

"We saw that the new economics would not work, and we worked against it while others ran for the hills.

"We in the labor movement stand up and fight for what we believe in. And, you've been an important part of that program of political and social action.

"To improve the human condition is your and my responsibility. . . . We are part of the labor movement, an institution which every day and in every way seeks to improve this nation."



## Dennis McDermott President, CLC

"We've learned that real militance is not just demonstrating, making noise and using a lot of rhetoric. We have to use applied, practical knowledge; think it out. Demonstrations, conferences, resolutions and words do not threaten the establishment, the power elite. Follow-up and intelligent concerted action do.

"The monopolists and the overprivileged recognize the potential of people power much better than we do. It's why they spend so much time and energy and money trying to keep us so divided.

"Yes, we're hurting. But, we're a class movement in both countries. This is a class union."



## Lindy Boggs Member, Congress (LA)

"The task that faces all of us is immense: guiding our powerful but unwieldy national economy through some very difficult times.

"It is easy to become discouraged. Sometimes it seems that just about the only growth industry we have is the federal deficit. It has more than tripled since this Administration took office. And, the Democratic Party is fighting supply-side fever to pull it down so the current weak recovery can strengthen.

"But, I cannot be discouraged for long . . .

"Our goal is to make adjustments to public policy that enhance our diversity while ensuring equity for those who must work and want to work."



## Jim Sasser U.S. Senator (TN)

"Reaganomics, voodoo economics, surprise-side economics or supply-side economics, whatever you want to call it, is the New Deal in reverse. It's a reshuffling of the economic cards to take from the middle class and working poor and give to the rich.

"The Reagan tax cut to the rich was designed to encourage saving and reinvestment. He doesn't trust the middle class with a tax cut.

"The cut has caused the largest budget deficit in our history with resulting high interest rates that have paralyzed the economy and made it impossible for the young to buy homes or cars."



## Ian Deans Member, House of Commons, New Democratic Party

"The New Democratic Party works with unionists that care about people. It represents all the things trade unions have fought to achieve at the bargaining table, on picket lines and in legislation: old age pensions, hours-of-work legislation that did away with sweatshops, comprehensive health care, comprehensive auto insurance, adequate protections in the workplace, safety and health legislation that gave people some hope for the future, tenant rights legislation, equal pay for equal work, statutory paid holidays, and maternity benefits.

"Some were achieved after a long battle with tough opposition. But, we did it together."



## Joyce Miller President, CLUW

"Forty-six percent of federal government layoffs were women, although they comprised only 29 percent of federal employees.

"Seventy-two percent of the elderly are women. So cuts in Medicare largely affect older women . . .

"Social Security cuts affect women more, since they are less likely than men to have pensions.

"Over one-half of the elderly women have incomes of less than \$5,000 per year.

"They must choose between housing or fuel, going to the doctor or the grocery store. No elderly person should have to make such choices."





Both the address and written report of President John Kelly summarized the activities and achievements of our International Union between Conventions. Portions of the International President's Report are reprinted here which outline the challenges and OPEIU responses to those challenges in areas of service, organizing, and political action over the last three years.

### Organizing and Service

For 38 years, the Office and Professional Employees International Union was the only union that cared enough to organize and represent white collar workers. We have during that time become the leading representative in industries like insurance, banking and universities.

Now, with declining memberships, every blue collar union in the U.S. and Canada is touting itself as the union for white collar workers. But, where were these unions in the 1940s and 1950s when white collar workers needed representation just as much as they do today. They were in the factories, steel mills, railroads and airlines. Only now that these industries are shrinking and these unions face reduced memberships are they jumping into the white collar organizing fray.

But, since the 1940s when no one else cared, we were there. We continued to organize and represent the otherwise neglected white collar worker ever since.

In the last three years all but five other AFL-CIO unions have declined. Under the leadership and direction of our International Union, our membership has continued to expand. The use of team organizers, local subsidy programs and the development of new organizing strategies at our educational conferences have shown dramatic successes. It is a growth pattern of which we are particularly proud.

This growth was achieved in spite of the increased competition from other labor organizations and despite additional management union-busting techniques.

The International has repeatedly warned our representatives and local unions of the threats from union-busting, labor relations consultants and their sophisticated strategies. These highly-paid consultants are involved in the vast majority of our organizing drives today. They are given free rein by the companies that hire them. And, they use methods that are arguably illegal. They do not discriminate, but can be found on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border.

The International assigned teachers for classes on the most typical union-busting strategies and the means for combatting them—at regional educational conferences, full-time staff meetings, and local union educational programs. These classes have focussed on tactics used in organizing campaigns and those used in a collective bargaining setting (after the election).

The latter are often the most insidious. In order to oust or render unions weak, the consultants have frequently waged successful decertification elections, forced units out on strike, established quality circles to isolate locals.

We have been active with the AFL-CIO and CLC in attempting to curb the activities of these union busters, to see that they register as required under



# When No Others Cared, ... We Were There

the Landrum-Griffin Act in the U.S., to research and report on the proliferating "union-free" seminars conducted by the busters, and to fight for legislation that will protect white collar workers from attacks by these consultants.

The labor (labour) boards and courts in both countries have increasingly handed down rulings adverse to the labor movement. Just an example, in the U.S. in the NLRB ruling in the *Midland Life Insurance* case, where board ruled that false or misleading statements no longer would be grounds for cancelling the results of union representation elections, thereby further encouraging employers to lie.

In Canada legislation in Newfoundland requires that a union organize *all* plants and branches of a

company that are located in that province before the labour board will act on a representation petition. On both sides of the border, therefore, the legislative and political trends are remarkably similar. Corporate contempt for labor is international.

In spite of the overwhelming obstacles, we have had a remarkable success rate, partially due to the new team-approach to organizing. The International no longer sends a lone organizer into the field on an organizing campaign. Instead a team of organizers is assigned to an area or a campaign. In this way at least one or part of the team is on site throughout the entire campaign, maintaining consistency, credibility and viability.

The International continues to encourage local unions to initiate their own campaigns. Once a campaign appears viable, the International will assign the team of organizers to the campaign. At such a point the International obviously assumes a substantial portion of the campaign's expense.

Locals should target their organizing efforts at groups of a minimum of 50 to 100. Small bargaining units are highly vulnerable to decertifications due to weak economic power and high turnover. Furthermore, the cost of servicing a small unit is much greater than a large unit and could bankrupt a local.

Another means of local union organizing is through the International subsidy program. This program permits locals, who have proven their commitment, to organize on their own and, thereby, encourage the continued growth of the union. Because of the subsidies, they are able to hire additional staff, enabling them to provide their own experienced organizers. The figures prove that both programs are working well.

### Organizing Successes

As indicated the main thrust for organization continues to be through our local unions, where orga-

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nizing leads and initial contacts are generated. In fact, in the two years between Conventions, the Henderson B. Douglas Award has been earned by local unions. The Douglas Award is given to the individual(s) or local union that organizes the greatest number of members in a single organizing campaign.

In 1981, the Douglas Award went to Local 6, headed by Vice President Jim Mahoney in Boston, for organizing the 3,000 employees of the Judiciary System in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In 1982, Local 2 of Washington, D.C., headed by Vice President L. J. Sheridan, won the award for organizing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority—the public transit system in Washington.

Both Locals 6 and 2 returned the money portion of the award back to the International for the VOTE fund.

At the Department of Energy in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, over 500 federal government employees ranging from nuclear engineers to storehouse clerks voted overwhelmingly for OPEIU over a competitive union.

In Michigan at Lansing General Hospital, registered nurses rejected the Michigan Nurses Association in favor of OPEIU, clearly showing that the health care professional prefers a trade union organi-

And, we do care. We care not only about our own members but all of the working people in Canada and the United States. As I have repeatedly said, we are a movement and a force for good—the good of all organized and unorganized. But for this movement, Americans and Canadians would not enjoy the social legislation we do today.

The labor movement has decidedly improved the quality of lives of working people, moving them into the middle class. But, the governments in both nations are on a course that has meant a continuing spiral downward in those living standards.

In both nations we have been faced with escalating and unprecedented unemployment rates. Vast numbers of workers have been deprived of jobs. Because of these irrational and heartless policies, more than 11 percent of the U.S. population is unemployed; more than 12 percent are without work in Canada.

Both nations have also experienced outrageous interest rates, reduced factory and production orders, reduced housing starts, which have resulted in the greatest number of bankruptcies in U.S. and Canadian history, leading to more and more unemployment.

We cannot in good conscience refrain from opposing such irrational economic policies. We must support, financially and through the ballot box, candi-

dates pledged to respond to the needs of working people. And, we do. Because we care.

### Solidarity Day

Our most visible protest against the U.S. Administration and its heartless policies clearly was Solidarity Day—the largest demonstration ever held in Washington, D.C. Nearly 2,000 OPEIU members marched at the nation's capitol on September 19, 1981, to tell the Reagan Administration that they were fed up with its economic policies, its anti-union and anti-people legislation, and the abandonment of compassion for the needy and aged.

And, then the marchers backed up their protests in November 1982, on Solidarity Day II when they overwhelmingly voted to elect pro-people candidates to the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate and state governorships.

Now we face Solidarity III—Labor Day 1983—when we will participate as OPEIU members in demonstrations and parades around the country, mobilizing rank-and-file trade unionists for the November 1984 elections.

### Voice of the Electorate

More and more of our members have recognized the need for voluntary political contributions to VOTE and the need to protect gains won at the bargaining table through political action. Since the last Convention, in fact, record contributions have poured in.

While I am pleased with the successes we have achieved, much more can be done and must be done. Last Convention I reported that by 1982 there would likely be 2,000 corporate, trade association and ultra-right-wing PACs, contributing as much as \$80 million to political candidates pledged to support management and right-wing programs.

I considerably underestimated their growing numbers and strengths. As of 1982, there were 3,281 corporate, trade association and ultra right-wing PACs, which had collected \$142.6 million. This compares to 413 labor organization PACs, that raised \$32.2 million. The opposition, therefore, continues to raise more than \$4 for each dollar we raise.

We cannot then sit back on our laurels, especially with one of the most important elections of all facing us in 1984. We must raise funds to fight government policies that have given us a sagging economy and record unemployment levels. We must unseat those administrations that set such policies. To do so, we must contribute to VOTE.

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zation to associations that are not a part of the labor movement.

These are just a few of the many organizing and affiliation successes we have had over the past three years.

### The Future of Organizing

Without organizing we cannot protect our current OPEIU members. A tragic example is the case of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Surveys of wage differentials between the unorganized and organized white collar are frequently used as a justification for no wage increases, lower starting salaries for new employees, and compression of the wage structure. At TVA we have 4,200 OPEIU members who have been red-circled for two years because they earned salaries far in excess of other white collar workers in the area.

They are an island of union employees in a sea of unorganized, and the non-union employer associations in the region said, "It's time to stop TVA wage increases before we, too, are forced to raise our wages." What happened at TVA can happen anywhere if local unions do not organize.

### Political Action

OPEIU has become increasingly active in political affairs—supporting and opposing candidates for state, provincial and federal office; supporting and opposing legislation for the benefit of our members; contributing to our political action fund "Voice of the Electorate," conducting voter registration drives.

Of necessity, we must be involved in the political lives of our two nations, Canada and the United States. Although we can protect our members through collective bargaining, we do not live in a vacuum. Other forces, most notably those political, also affect and change our lives. We must become involved in the shape those lives take, if we care.

OPEIU's new Convention backdrop features members and representative white-collar jobs: nurse, bank teller, video display terminal operator and draftsman.

## TVA's "Steel Magnolia"

"Even though women in the South are raised to be soft and sweet, there's steel running through some of us that just won't quit," Judy Hutcheson, an OPEIU member at the Tennessee Valley Authority, told the Convention delegates.

Hutcheson, the agent for an OPEIU-EEOC class action suit against TVA, described events leading to the discrimination case.

She said that after 30 years of excellent labor relations, in order to please the non-union businesses in the Tennessee Valley the TVA administration had imposed area wage surveys on the unions, frozen salaries, and told the union members that if they did not accept the contract they would lose everything. "The unions and members were in a hostage bargaining situation," she said, "and had to sign."

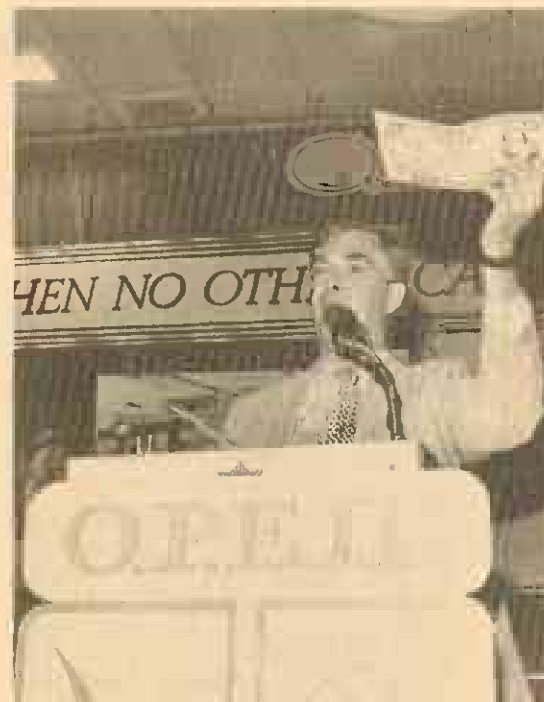
However, to determine average area wages TVA used two different area wage surveys—one for the predominantly female occupations and one for the predominantly male. It was the women's salaries, she said, that were frozen. As a result, Hutcheson lent her name to the suit which was filed by OPEIU on behalf of all the women employees.

Hutcheson reported that she was hopeful of the outcome. And, she thanked the International for



its complete support. She also thanked President John Kelly for the unlimited support he had given the TVA members. "I don't know where we'd be right now. I just can't say thank you enough," she concluded.

# Caring Faces at a Caring Convention



# Delegates Reelect Progressive Team



*AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue (center) raises the hands of Secretary-Treasurer Roméo Corbeil and President John Kelly in a victory salute.*

The nearly 500 delegates to OPEIU's 16th Triennial Convention, held June 6-10, 1983, unanimously voted their approval of the leadership team by reelecting all International officers by acclamation. In so doing, they signified strong approval of and support for the policies of the International Union over the last three years.

## When No Others Cared, ... We Were There

(Continued from page 7)

At this Convention, numerous resolutions will be passed on issues of concern to our members. Just a few likely to be included are demands for legislation protecting fringe benefits from taxation, support for the Equal Rights Amendment, legislative protections for operators of video display terminals, protection of pension and Social Security/Medicare benefits, and many more. In order to carry out the mandate of the Convention delegates, the International must have the financial resources to wage the fight.

The legislative process is long and costly. We must research and write legislation, testify before Congressional committees, lobby legislators and frequently take our case to the news media and general public. Don't ask us to do so much with so little. Support your own interests through VOTE.

### Conclusion

The 1980s have shown OPEIU and the white collar workers are at a historical point. Despite the challenges, the next decade will be the era of the white collar worker and with continued determination and commitment, the era of OPEIU.

Our success and the success of the entire labor movement will depend upon developing a highly integrated organization whose membership is educated, that is activated politically, and that is dedicated to the unionization of the new white collar workers—the worker of the future. Our children's future lifestyle depends on it.

In nominating John Kelly for reelection to the position of International President, Delegate Michael Goodwin stressed that he had brought OPEIU to even greater heights in organizing, servicing and political action. Goodwin called Kelly an activist leader whose liberal, progressive programs have changed (not stayed) the course of the union.

"We need you," he said to Kelly, "now more than ever before. We know you care. We care for you as well." The delegates echoed Goodwin's sentiments as they staged a prolonged demonstration around the convention hall.

In nominating Roméo Corbeil for International Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President Fred Trotter said: "Roméo is a warm and compassionate leader, whom I am proud to call a friend. He has earned not only our respect for his capabilities, but our love. Although there will be a void in Canada, the Union as a whole will gain from his election to the post of Secretary-Treasurer."

The following Vice Presidents were elected unanimously by acclamation from the indicated regions:

- Region II Michael Goodwin  
Gerald Iushewitz  
James Mahoney  
L. J. Sheridan
- Region III Charles Harris
- Region IV J. B. Moss
- Region V Kathleen Kinnick  
Gwen Newton
- Region VI Gary Kirkland
- Region VII Billie D. Adams  
Harvey Markusen
- Region VIII Fred Trotter
- Region IX William Wittal
- Region X Gilles Beauregard

Michel Rousseau was elected for the first time to the position of Vice President for Region I. Rousseau replaces Roméo Corbeil in that post.

Rousseau began his career with OPEIU as a Business Representative for Local 57 (Montreal) in November 1971. Secretary-Treasurer Corbeil said Rousseau had represented members in all of the Local's sectors—public, financial, and industrial.

His greatest challenge, however, was negotiations for and representation of the 1,600 members in Quebec's school boards. There he successfully negotiated with the Quebec government for a province-wide agreement, coordinating with other unions throughout.

## Trotter Elected Canadian Director



Fred Trotter was also unanimously elected as OPEIU Canadian Director. The Canadian Director works with the International President to coordinate all organizing, education and service activities in Canada. He also serves as the spokesman for Canadian members on all matters affecting the Canadian membership.

Trotter's contributions to British Columbia's Local 378, the Canadian membership, and the entire union were outlined by Vice President Gilles Beauregard in his nominating speech. Unfortunately they are too numerous to outline here. (See the next issue of *White Collar*.)

## 1983 Doug Award for Organizing



Pictured here Secretary-Treasurer Roméo Corbeil and President John Kelly present the 1983 Henderson B. Douglas Award to International Representative Jay Porcaro for organizing. The Doug Award is presented annually to the local or individual(s) who organize the largest single unit during the year.