

WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 350

JANUARY, 1976



Executive Board Amends Strike Benefit Rules

At its semi-annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., following the Western Educational Conference held in that city, the Executive Board among other actions elected a new Vice President, took steps to bolster the depleted Strike Benefit Fund, effectuated changes in the OPEIU Pension Plan, urged all Locals to accelerate new organizing activities, and approved a charter for a new Western Pennsylvania Local.

International Representative Gary D. Kirkland was elected Vice President for Region VI which includes the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho,

Montana, Wyoming and Alaska, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Walter E. Engelbert.

Twenty-eight years old, Kirkland is the youngest Vice President ever elected to the board. He began his union career as a staff organizer for Portland Local 11 and was named an International Representative in 1973.

Informed by President Coughlin that the Strike Benefit Fund had been depleted by almost \$1,000,000 during the past year as a result of four lengthy strikes at Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Buffalo, N.Y., and

Newark, N.J.; at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics in New London, Conn., and at the Insurance Company of B.C. in Vancouver, Canada, the board studied various steps to protect the integrity of the Fund thus guaranteeing payments to future striking members.

It then amended the Strike Benefit Plan in several ways. At the onset of a strike, President Coughlin will notify the Local union of the maximum number of weekly payments that will be made at the current rate with the provision that the number of payments "may

be extended if the condition of the Strike Benefit Fund permits."

Additionally, before strike authorization is granted an International Representative may be dispatched to investigate the particular strike situation and will then notify the President, enabling him to have a better picture of the issues at stake and perhaps helping to bring about a strike-free settlement.

It was also decided that until the Fund is more viable, strike benefits will no longer be paid to OPEIU members honoring the picket lines of other unions.

The board held a lengthy dis-

ussion on the need for accelerated new organizing activities at the International and Local levels. It urged all Local unions to become more involved in new organizing efforts, particularly in the public sector, and among employees at banks, hospitals and Blue Cross/Blue Shield offices who are ripe for unionization.

The board spent an entire day discussing the impact of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), on the OPEIU Pension Plan. This meeting was attended by Sr. Vice President Sidney Brav-

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New London Strike Ends; Unions Win 47% Packet

A 43-month agreement providing wage gains totaling 41% over the period, with greatly improved fringe benefits, ended a long and costly strike of 10,000 members of the Metals Trade Council—including about 1,200 Local 106 members—against the General Dynamics' Electric Boat Division at New London, Conn.

The total value of the contract, with wages and fringe benefits combined, is about a 47% increase over the last year of the previous three-year pact.

The settlement of the long strike was reached under the mediation of W. J. Usery, Jr., director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, two assistants and a state mediator.

Representing OPEIU members in the joint negotiations with the New London Metal Trades Council were Local 106 President Ray Winklebleeck and Vice President Carl Orsini.

The new pact provides a 13% general wage increase in the first year; an 18¢ per hour COLA adjustment on July 1, 1976; a 6% across-the-board raise on each of the two following anniversary dates; a 10¢ COLA adjustment thirty months after signing, and another 6% general increase on the third anniversary date.

It sets a starting rate of \$3.64 an hour in the lowest office grade, rising to a \$4.98 maximum in the final contract year, and in the top classifications of radiography film inspectors and auditors a starting rate of \$5.23, rising to a \$7.34 an hour maximum.

Group insurance and medical benefits were liberalized, the company increasing AD&D benefits by \$5 per week in each class each year. This brings the maximum rate to \$105 per week in the first year, rising to \$120 in the final year.

The hospital room and board allowance was raised to \$75 per day in the first year, and will be increased by \$5 each year to \$90 in the final year. Major medical was increased to \$50,000 (was \$15,000), and will be raised to \$75,000 on July 1, 1977.

A new dental plan will take effect 24 months after signing of the contract and will cover employees and their dependents who are eligible to receive ben-

efits under the company's medical benefit program.

Employees who retire after July 1, 1975, but prior to July 1, 1976, will receive a benefit of \$6.50 per month for each year of credited service, which will be adjusted to \$7.50 per month with the first payment on July 1, 1976.

Pension benefits will be raised to \$8 per month on July 1, 1977, to \$9 on the third contract anniversary, and to \$10 per month 42 months after signing the contract, an increase of more than 50%. Disability benefits will also be adjusted to equal the higher basic benefit levels for employees who retire on disability on and after such effective dates.

Blue Cross Pact Wins 18% Pay Boost Milwaukee Unit Also Gains Better Fringe Benefits

A two-year agreement providing pay increases totaling 18% over the period has been renegotiated by Milwaukee Local 9 for its 700-member unit at Blue Cross of Wisconsin in its main office and ten satellite branches throughout the state, Business Manager Edward J. Kubicki and International Representative Mike Walker report.

The agreement, retroactive to November 10, provides 10% salary increases across-the-board in the first year with an additional 8% to take effect on the same 1976 date. With the initial increases, weekly salaries will range from \$101.91 for beginning messengers to \$222.43

for senior computer programmers.

The agreement also provides an improved pension plan, an 11th holiday—a floater to be named by the company—and four weeks vacation after 12 rather than 14 years of service.

A new summer hours provision in the contract revises the employees' work schedule for the period from May 21 through September 3. Under the plan, employees continue to work a 37½-hour week but take a half-hour rather than an hour for lunch every day and leave at three o'clock on Fridays.

An improved snow emergen-

St. Louis Blue Shield Office Joins OPEIU

The OPEIU organized its eighth Blue Cross/Blue Shield office in St. Louis, Mo., when Local 13 won an election among 170 office employees at Missouri Medical Services, Inc. (Blue Shield of Missouri), by a vote of 121-to-49, climaxing a campaign lasting almost three years. Some 60 other Blue Cross/Blue Shield offices are still unorganized, most in cities and towns where OPEIU Locals already exist.

Local 13 President Tom O'Brien and Business Representative George O'Brien, who jointly conducted the campaign, report that recently management hired some efficiency experts. The latter concluded that if layoffs became likely such

could be avoided by attrition. Citing the experts' report to employees, management assured them on job safety. But shortly thereafter it about-faced and fired 22 employees. Resentment immediately flared up, those remaining were now convinced that their best job assurance was a union contract.

O'Brien also credits an "energetic in-office committee" which worked conscientiously to swing the St. Louis Blue Shield office into the OPEIU ranks.

He further reports that Local 13 has received certification, following a card check, as bargaining agent for a unit of 40 office employees who work in the Circuit Clerk's office of St. Clair County. He said this victory should spur new organizing among six similar offices in the St. Louis area.

Canadian Director Romeo Corbeil announces that Montreal Local 57 has obtained certification from the Quebec Labour Relations Board for a new 200-member unit of office employees at the Montreal Credit Bureau after a long struggle with the employer.

Although an overwhelming majority had signed designation cards indicating they wanted collective bargaining, the employer refused to recognize the OPEIU and attempted to overturn the board's ruling through court action. However, the court dismissed the employer's plea and upheld the board's certification.

The campaign was spearheaded by Local 57 Staff Repre-

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

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Multinationals Export Jobs

A study by the Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations finds that U.S. labor's share amounting to \$25 billions of national income has been lost as a result of their activities overseas, which also "tends to reduce union strength."

The study, conducted for Senator Frank Church's committee by Peggy Musgrave, one of the nation's noted tax economists, finds that organized labor's strength is reduced by:

- The ability of the multinational corporations to play off their foreign workers against their U.S. workers.
 - The increased wealth of the corporations.
 - The reduced economic resources of U.S. labor.
- In probing the extent to which multinational corporations have exported jobs and dollars, the study found that:
- Foreign investments by U.S. multinationals has meant a drop of 4%, or \$25 billions annually, in labor's share of the national income.
 - U.S. corporations have over \$150 billions in direct investment abroad.
 - In 1970 U.S. firms paid their foreign labor wages which were less than half as much as they paid U.S. workers.
 - Foreign investment is largely concentrated in high technology and research and development-intensive industries, thus decreasing the U.S. worker's former advantage of technological superiority.

The great flow of foreign investment is a result not of neutral international capital markets but of U.S. government incentives to multinational corporations to invest abroad, the study finds, including the fact that our present system taxes foreign earnings only after they are brought back to the U.S.

The Church study suggests, and we agree, that tax reform is urgently needed now to encourage multinational corporations to invest more at home and less abroad. By doing this, such tax reform could go a long way toward solving our national unemployment problem which is growing more serious day by day.

Urge Congress to Aid Jobless

The AFL-CIO Policy Committee has urged Congress to undertake an "immediate and sustained campaign" to reduce joblessness to 3 percent. The rate now is 8.3 percent.

"Full employment must mean that the unemployed, at any time, would be only persons who are temporarily jobless—such as entrants to the labor force, people moving from one job to another or from one part of the country to another, or who are temporarily jobless as a result of seasonal fluctuations in their specific industry," the policy statement asserted.

Other essential provisions of an acceptable full-employment program, the committee said, should:

- Require the President to submit annual "targets, policies and programs" to Congress, detailing ways to achieve full employment and to meet national needs.
- Require the President to propose specific federal tax, monetary and budget policies to be pursued for full employment, balanced economic growth and national needs.
- Set up a consultative body, composed of major groups in the economy, to review the President's goals and policies.
- Establish procedures for prompt Congressional review and action on the President's economic programs.
- Require the Federal Reserve Board to "justify" to the President and Congress the manner in which its monetary policies will help meet full employment targets.

The Committee said Congress must realize that an obsession with budget deficits ignores the benefits of a full-employment economy—more jobs and higher earnings, reduced unemployment benefits and welfare costs, increased sales for business, increased savings and investment and greater tax receipts.

The panel called for distribution of the policy statement to every member of Congress and offered the AFL-CIO's assistance to legislators in drafting a proposed full employment law that will meet labor's goal of "jobs at decent wages for everyone able to work and seeking work."

We sincerely hope the Congress will give labor's proposals top priority when it reconvenes in the New Year.

Every \$2 Gift to VOTE Gives OPEIU More Political Clout

Another important election year has rolled around. Even if you don't read the newspapers or listen to radio and TV news, you'd know it . . . because you're going to be besieged by fund appeals from any number of candidates for all kinds of political offices.

We've always encouraged our union members to contribute to the candidates of their choice. We still do, but with this reminder:

Before you give to candidates, first give \$2 to VOTE, the OPEIU Voice of the Electorate.

There's a very practical reason for this: *VOTE uses your money better. There's more political mileage in it.*

Do you know what often happens to a big chunk of whatever money you contribute to a candidate? He or she uses it to collect more funds.

There are recent examples of candidates—a lot of them—spending as much as \$1 someone gave them to collect \$1.50 from somebody else through costly fund-raising mailings.

This shrinks the hard-earned dollars you generously contribute.

But the \$2 you give to VOTE is different. In the first place, VOTE doesn't have to spend the funds you contribute to it to collect more funds.

So every penny you give to VOTE becomes available for VOTE contributions to endorsed candidates.

And those contributions come at a time when they count most . . . when a candidate has to use them for direct campaign purposes like needed literature, radio/TV spots, news ads, registration and get-out-the-vote—not just to raise more money.

This makes VOTE dollars high-yield, high-velocity funds.

This makes VOTE dollars count.

You don't need a slide rule or pocket computer to figure out the arithmetic of it. It's simple: Give \$2 to a candidate and maybe half of it is used for real bread-and-butter campaigning.

Give \$2 to VOTE, and all of it is used the way it should be.

This is a pivotal election year. The Presidency is at stake, as well as scores of too-close-to-call U.S. House and Senate contests. Many good friends of working people face tough races.

VOTE funds can help them. They can make the difference.

So, go ahead and give to the candidates of your choice, but first be sure to give \$2 to VOTE. We use it better.

Meany Commends NLRB But Says Statutory Reform Now Needed

The record of the National Labor Relations Board has been "commendable" and "consistently far better than most federal agencies," AFL-CIO President George Meany declared at the board's 40th anniversary banquet. But Meany stressed that legislative reform of the board's statutory base is sorely needed.

The National Labor Relations Act, signed into law in 1935, "is not working as well as it should, and that's why we are asking the Congress to study what has been done and come up with a better way of achieving the goal of encouraging the practice and procedures of collective bargaining," Meany said.

All too often, he observed, the NLRA frustrates and impedes the fulfillment of its original promise: to assist workers in exercising their basic right to organize and bargain collectively.

Citing "needless" delays built into the board's election and unfair labor practice machinery, Meany declared:

"The right to bargaining collectively has no meaning if it is afforded a year, two years or even more after it is sought. . . . The time has come to act on, rather than merely give lip service to, the principle that justice delayed is justice denied."

He noted that even in the most simple cases—a petition for a representation election—it takes an NLRB regional director about six weeks to issue an election notice. In cases that go to the full board, the median time is 89 days.

He added that as of last April the median time from the filing of an unfair labor charge to issuance of a board decision was

385 days—one year and 20 days.

"And then, of course, the employer can take the matter to court and consume an additional year or two before any relief is afforded the employees whose rights the act is supposed to protect," Meany pointed out.

We want a law that provides even-handed remedies, not one that allows the J. P. Stevenses of this world to thumb their noses at the board and the courts and still receive luscious contracts," he said. "We want a law that mandates a prompt resolution of disputes."

Meany noted the difficulties the NLRB faces in handling an

increasingly heavy caseload with a limited budget and staff and said the AFL-CIO would continue to support larger appropriations for the agency.

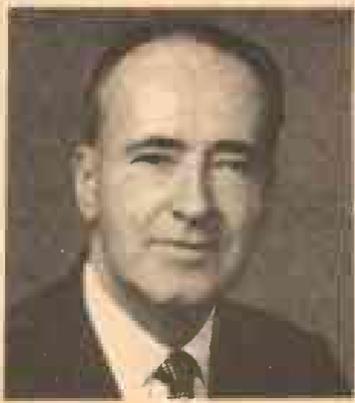
Labor Secretary John T. Dunlop, another speaker, warned that increasing tension between government regulation and collective bargaining faces the nation. He said he hoped some way would be found to make the two systems "less antagonistic" and more compatible.

Betty Southard Murphy, the first woman to chair the NLRB, made brief introductory remarks.

Detroit Unit Aids Blood Drive



Douglas Fraser, UAW Vice President, donates a pint of blood to the Joint Local 42 and UAW Solidarity House annual drive in Detroit for the Southeastern Michigan Red Cross blood program. Looking on from left are: Louise Rochford, R.N., Local 42 member Evelyn Thomas, Director of Labor Participation (Red Cross Wolverine Div.), and co-chairpersons Martin Dixon, UAW International Representative, and Doris Pentz, also a Local 42 member. The drive collected 139 pints of blood.



from the desk
of the

PRESIDENT

Watergate Scandals Forgotten

The newspapers of our country and the radio and television media would have you believe that the AFL-CIO is all-powerful in the political arena through large sums of money at its disposal contributed by its members throughout the United States. Based on the articles you read or the commentator you listen to, these sums have been estimated as \$5 millions, \$50 millions, or \$100 millions, based on reader and listener credibility.

As you know, the law forbids labor organizations to use any money from general funds for political contributions. Consequently, all such money raised is contributed on a voluntary basis by union members of International Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Those of us who have seen accurate reports of monies collected know that the sums raised are infinitesimal as compared to the speculations of reporters. Workers who contribute are generally dedicated members who truly believe, and rightly so, that the AFL-CIO is the only spokesman for working men and women in the Halls of Congress.

Recently, to give corporations "equal power," the law was changed to allow them to set up in-house committees to solicit contributions from employees and stockholders. The Federal Election Commission, set up in the wake of the Watergate scandal with a mandate to rationalize election laws, is allowing corporations to repay expenses incurred by political action committees of those corporations in soliciting political contributions. The corporations can decide which candidates will receive financial support. The Federal Election Commission thus increases the legal authority for all companies and industrial associations to use their own funds and resources to influence the elective process.

It is difficult to understand the thinking of the Federal Election Commission which did not find illegal violations by labor unions, but rather found numerous large corporations in flagrant violation of the law by expending millions of dollars of stockholder money, sometimes in cash, to various committees set up for re-electing President Richard Nixon. The ruling of the Federal Election Commission is, in effect, widening the possibilities of abuse of power in the form of either coercion on the part of the employer on employees to contribute and/or the decision to support certain political candidates without the consent of the coerced employee.

Raymond C. Christie, a middle-management executive with Baker Perkins Inc., in Saginaw, Michigan, wrote to the Federal Election Commission and stated: "Your decision subjects thousands of company employees to the pressures of corporate managers to contribute to the party or causes that management deems important. An employee is expected to go along with management decisions. To refuse means that one is not part of the team and this is a major factor when the company considers salary increases and promotions."

The *New York Times*, in a recent article entitled "The New Corporate Presence in Politics," wrote of a recent seminar conducted by management wherein an attorney in attendance was asked by an executive whether it would not be a problem if a committee gave money to candidates not sympathetic to the company's problems. "Management," was the reply, "appoints the committee."

At a large chemical corporation, seven such political action committees have been set up which conceivably could provide a total of \$70,000 to a single Presidential candidate next year. Corporation after corporation is getting on the bandwagon to raise political funds in the manner herein described. Corporate political action committees are proliferating in accordance with a governmental report and the pace is accelerating.

Special teams from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States are fanning out across the country from Nashua, New Hampshire, to Seattle, Washington, to advise businessmen on political committees. Corporate executives have stepped up their requests for political fund raising information from such organizations as the National Association of Manufacturers as well as the Federal Election Commission.

Among numerous corporations that have formed political action committees and have registered them with the Commission are Coors, Crocker National Bank, American Express, Metropolitan Life Insurance, R. J. Reynolds, Anaconda, General Electric, Lockheed Aircraft, Pullman and United States Steel. Altogether there are more than 200 such committees formed by business, financial and professional organizations, and another 120 have been initiated by corporations.

Federal Election Commissioner Joan D. Aikens said that much

Women's Coalition Maps Plans Tied-in to Union Movement

More than 1,000 participants in the first constitutional convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in Detroit voted decisively to keep CLUW a trade union organization.

Women from 48 states and the District of Columbia, members of 63 national and international union, including the OPEIU, took part in the three-day program. They rejected by big margins efforts to open up CLUW membership to non-union members, and they reaffirmed the coalition's main goal of developing action programs

within the framework of the labor movement in four key areas:

- To strengthen the role and participation of women within their unions and the trade union movement as a whole.
- To seek affirmative action in the work place.
- To organize the millions of unorganized women workers.
- To encourage union women to play an active role in the legislative and political processes of their union and the nation.

Founded in March, 1974, CLUW now has 5,100 members

in 47 chapters throughout the nation. The 12 CLUW regions are in the process of electing 15 regional vice presidents.

CLUW's newly adopted constitution sets up a national council of five top officers and a national executive board with proportional representation from unions, regions and chapters.

A yearly membership fee of \$10 was established with \$1 going to a special travel expense account. This travel fund will defray the expenses of national executive board members who have no sources of reimbursement and thus increase participation in meetings. The dues rate for retirees, who maintain union membership, was set at \$5 per year.

Local 30 President Named To Fill New AFL-CIO Post

Cynthia McCaughan, who has served as President of OPEIU Local 30 in Los Angeles for 20 years, has been appointed by AFL-CIO President George Meany as Coordinator of Women's Activities in the federation's Department of Civil Rights, effective with the beginning of the New Year.

Her appointment as a staff assistant is a follow-up on the strong commitment to the rights of women workers voted by the recent AFL-CIO convention, including an amendment to the federation's constitution making explicit the responsibilities of the Department of Civil Rights in this area.

Sister McCaughan was community services representative of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO and has been labor coordinator with the United Way in that city since March 1953. She is a past president and board member of the Western Labor Press Association.



Cynthia McCaughan

She has also served the Los Angeles AFL-CIO on numerous committees, including those dealing with consumer affairs, civil rights and women in the work force, and has represented the central body on various community organizations.

She is married to Don McCaughan, a vice president of the Printing & Graphic Communications Union.

Conn. Health Center Yields 10% Pay Boost in Reopener

A 10% salary increase across-the-board was gained in a contract reopener by New Haven Local 466 for its office unit at the Community Health Care Center Plan, Inc., International Representative — Justin F. Manning reports.

He says the new boost sets a starting salary of \$6,145.88 in the lowest office grade, rising to a \$7,153.38 maximum, and \$11,445.20 in the top grade, rising to a \$12,432.68 maximum per annum.

of the enthusiasm for the new method of employing corporate funds to generate political activity seems to come from a feeling among businessmen that they need to match union activity. This is ridiculous. Corporations with such legal license will raise a thousand times more money than the American labor movement has been able to raise. Their motives will be much more selfish.

The National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which are leaders in this field, are opposed to the union shop, oppose the use of food stamps for strikers and would shackle collective bargaining through amendments to the National Labor Relations Act. It is imperative that the organized labor movement educate its members to the real menace of the Federal Election Commission's ruling. The scandals of the Nixon Administration where multi-millions of dollars, sometimes in cash, were lavishly given to Nixon re-election committees—many times for suspect purposes—will be minimal as compared to the scandals that will emanate from the new license given to the corporations of our country.

Two members of the Commission, who dissented from the majority, stated: "Unions are presumably limited to communicating with and soliciting their members. Corporations, however, may solicit not only their stockholders but all employees, whether union members or not."

Blue Shield Pact

(Continued from page 1)

bereavement leave is liberalized to include the death of grandchildren.

Under revisions in the existing joint savings plan, employees are eligible for participation at age 25 rather than 30. Employees voluntarily participate in the plan and contribute a percentage of their salary equal to the number of years they have participated in the plan. Employees contribute one percent the first year, two percent the second year, etc., and Blue Cross contributes 50 cents for each \$1 contributed by the employee.

While Walker and Kubicki headed the negotiating team, they were very ably assisted by Blue Cross bargaining committee members Judy Burnick, Sharon Scherf, Herman Lenhof, Vera Odom, Sue Jacobs, Betty Bakos and Diane Nimmer.

Vice President Billie Adams actively participated in the final stages of the negotiations.

New Organizing

(Continued from page 1)

representative Jacques Letendre who conducted the organizing drive.

Corbeil also announced that Local 57 is awaiting certification for a unit of 75 bank employees at the Banque Nationale de Paris, Canada, Ltd. This is a French-owned bank operating in Canada and the first foreign-owned bank to be organized there.

This success, Corbeil said, opens up a new organizing field among employees of numerous other foreign-owned banks in Montreal where many European banks have subsidiaries in operation. Incidentally, it is the second bank organized by the OPEIU in Montreal since employees of the Montreal City & District Savings Bank were unionized there some years ago.

International Representative Brian Fahlman reports that Vancouver, B.C., Local 15 has organized a small unit of 14 office employees at the British Pacific Life Insurance Company, Ltd., in that city.

Executive Board Amends Strike Benefit Rules

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erman of the Martin E. Segal Company, pension consultants, His actuarial analysis showed that while ERISA will require a fairly large number of changes, most will not result in any drastic changes in the OPEIU Plan because it "already has provisions which are at least as good as those mandated by ERISA."

Sec.-Treas. Bill Lowe gave a report on the sale of Attorney Joseph Finley's book—WHITE COLLAR UNION—outlining the history of the OPEIU. He said the paperback edition has been virtually sold out, and less than 1,000 copies of the hard-cover edition are still available. He stressed that there will be no reprinting of this book.

The board agreed that it is an excellent history of the OPEIU which can also be a valuable organizing tool. It urged all Locals to order a copy before the dwindling supply runs out.

Lowe also gave a report on

preparations being made for the OPEIU Convention which will be held in Los Angeles in 1977.

Canadian Director Romeo Corbeil gave a comprehensive report on overall conditions in Canada with particular stress on the government's wage and price-freeze program. He also reported that the "All-Canadian Conference" will be held in Montreal in late April, 1976.

Vice President Gwen Newton reported on her trip to Barbados as OPEIU delegate to the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET) Conference on Women's Activities. Among other actions taken by the board were:

- It granted the request of employees at the Valley Mould & Iron Company and Golden Dawn Food Company for a separate Local charter. Formerly they were members of Pittsburgh Local 33.

- Discussed the termination of the "no-raid" pact between

the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), the OPEIU and 21 other unions, and expressed regret that IBT invoked the six-month termination clause "because the pact was working."

- Discussed next year's agenda and host cities for the Educational Conferences program and decided that some be held in the spring, the others in the fall. It also decided that the full-time Staff Representatives' Conference be held in the spring, probably in Chicago.

- It decided to hold the next semi-annual meeting of the Executive Board in New York City.

- It also discussed the possibility of OPEIU mergers with certain other independent and International Unions in accordance with the aims of the AFL-CIO which has set up a special committee to study the feasibility of union mergers to strengthen organized labor as a whole.

Flexitime Gaining in Western World ILO Finds More Nations Adopting New System

Flexitime, the working system in which employees make up their weekly or monthly quota of hours in ways which mutually suit them and their employers, is gaining ground in many industrialized Western countries, according to an ILO report published in Geneva.

The system enables the employee to adapt his hours of work not only to his daily routine but also to his individual way of life, it says. For example, people who have to travel a relatively short distance to work and who want to go home at midday can choose a long lunch break, while others who prefer a short noon pause can leave early at the end of the day's work. The early riser can begin work, sooner than the worker who prefers going to bed late.

If a husband and wife work, they can arrange between them when to start and finish so as to suit their children's school hours. "In this way it becomes possible to enable a better harmonization of hours of work with family needs," the study comments.

But the main advantage to wage earners is, the report goes on, "the improvement in the quality of leisure time." It enables them to avoid traffic jams, to choose the best time of day for shopping and other activities and therefore minimizes unproductive free time.

"The new system also facilitates social and cultural life. It enables more time to be devoted to recreational and cultural activities as well as to general training."

It can "contribute not only to an improvement in the gen-

eral atmosphere and human relations in the undertaking but also to an ultimate enhancement of pleasure in work."

The system runs counter to the increasing constraints of organization and technique which characterize modern societies, and so gives workers a greater incentive to take an interest in their labor.

This can lead to an increase in productivity, a more efficient organization of work, the application of more rational methods of management and, therefore, "to an increase in the profitability of the economy as a whole," the study notes.

But the new system can operate only within certain norms. It is not suitable for some forms of shift work or factory assembly lines since these often require the regular presence of

fixed numbers of employees.

In some instances, flexitime can also cause internal difficulties of communications resulting in unused time, bottlenecks and perhaps employee disputes. Where there is a high rate of interdependence in job functions the system can prove a drawback, extra expenditure can also be incurred by having to staff, heat and light premises for longer hours.

Still, the report adds, these difficulties apparently do not "constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of the system of flexitime working hours."

According to private estimates, more than 30% of all wage earners in Switzerland—where the system has spread "with astonishing speed"—are benefiting from flexitime.

Public Employee Unit Signs First Pact with N.J. Township

A two-year contract providing an 8% wage increase and defining work hours and other conditions, plus a new dental plan, has been concluded by Jersey City Local 142 for its new unit of public employees in Jackson Township, N.J., International Representative Gene Dwyer reports.

The initial pact, retroactive to January 1, 1975, has been approved by the Township Committee. The negotiations started in December, 1974, and continued throughout the year with meetings between representatives of the P.B.A., the OPEIU and the Public Blue Collar Workers.

The school guards under traffic safety and the special policemen under the patrol division were included in the professional employees' agreement. The unionized town employees now include clerks, truck drivers, equipment operators, mechanics, laborers, school guards and special patrolmen.

Mrs. Alice Petrey, OPEIU Employee

Mrs. Alice Petrey, an OPEIU employee at the Washington, D.C. office for three years, was killed in an airplane crash with her husband on Christmas Day

Union Wins Job Promotion For Franklin, Pa. Member

Robert G. Swasta, a Local 352 member employed at Joy Manufacturing Company in Franklin, Pa., won the right to fill a computer operator-junior programmer job which he had been denied, after the OPEIU brought the case to arbitration.

Arbiter Fred L. Denson, of Rochester, N.Y., ruled that Swasta was entitled to adequate and proper training for 60 days, contemplating that he can perform satisfactorily without supervision after a nine-month period.

When the opening occurred in March, 1975, Swasta was turned down because he hadn't attended a computer school. Pointing out that the job description didn't contain educational guidelines or call for specialized training, the Union argued that the company was obligated to train the senior employee for the position.

Moreover, measurement standards for employees being considered for promotion was the subject of contract negotiations in September, 1974, when guidelines were established and aptitude tests formulated to determine whether an employee was qualified for promotion.

Swasta had successfully passed the aptitude test but the data processing manager refused to accept the contract standards because he "didn't have time to train the employee." In ruling against the employer, the arbiter upheld the



OPEIU Committee which brought the case to arbitration are (seated from left): Chairperson Alice Blair and Joyce Hoover; standing from left: Carl Say, Robert G. Swasta and Blaine Miller.

Union's argument that the employee had the necessary mental capacity, knowledge and skill to learn to perform the job, and declared the employer "may not superimpose additional prerequisites such as technical school training."

International Representative John W. Richards assisted Local 352 in presenting and preparing the case.

If you move, send your old and new address, including zip code and social security or social insurance number to:
William A. Lowe, Sec.-Treas.
815 16th Street, N.W., Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20006

Bay State Unit Wins 25½%

Wage gains totaling 25½% across-the-board in addition to fringe benefits improvements were gained by Local 269 in a new three-year contract renegotiated for its office unit at Spalding Company, manufacturers of sports equipment in Chicopee, Mass., according to International Representative Justin F. Manning.

He says the new pact calls for a general wage increase of 7% in the first year, 8% in the second, and 7½% in the third year. The wage gains range from \$32 per week to \$68 over the life of the contract, and result in a \$130 per week rate in the lowest grade to \$275 in the top office classification.

Other improvements were made in the vacation schedule, life insurance, surgical coverage and the pension plan.

Assisting in the negotiations was a committee headed by Local 269 President Jim MacDonald, which included Gilbert LaValley, Mary White, Cathy Fedar and Jean Goyette.

U.S. Price Index

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

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| 1974 | |
| November | 154.8 |
| December | 155.4 |
| 1975 | |
| January | 156.1 |
| February | 157.2 |
| March | 157.8 |
| April | 158.6 |
| May | 159.3 |
| June | 160.6 |
| July | 162.3 |
| August | 162.8 |
| September | 163.6 |
| October | 164.6 |
| November | 165.6 |

Canadian Price Index

Statistics Canada
Base 1961=100

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| 1974 | |
| November | 174.1 |
| December | 175.8 |
| 1975 | |
| January | 176.6 |
| February | 178.0 |
| March | 178.0 |
| April | 179.8 |
| May | 181.8 |
| June | 184.0 |
| July | 186.5 |
| August | 188.4 |
| * New Base 1971 = 100 | |
| August | 141.2 |
| September | 141.5 |
| October | 142.8 |
| November | 144.1 |

while flying to Tennessee to visit relatives. They are survived by eight children to whom we extend our deepest sympathy in their tragic bereavement.