

"We Must Stand Shoulder To Shoulder"

Here is a condensed copy of the Report To The IUE General Electric Conference Board by IUE President Carey, made on Dec. 7, 1956 in Washington, D. C. This report is so timely and of such importance to Schenectady GE workers that Local 301 has gone all-out to present it to all members. The first half of the report was carried in the last issue of the Local 301 News.

As we go into 1957, we should begin to set our sights ahead and plan for the future. It seems to me that of all the tasks we have ahead of us, there are four or five major issues.

FIRST OF ALL IS THE QUESTION OF JOB SECURITY.

Today, of course, many GE workers are enjoying steady work. Many even have overtime. But in other places, layoffs take place and we know from experience how fast layoffs can hit and how long they can last. Only a short while ago 20,000 GE workers were on layoff and many of them went for long months before they were called back. Some were never called back.

So now . . . we must begin our preparations for 1958 negotiations.

Our Contract calls for negotiation in 1958 on all matters affecting Employment Security. That means not only questions such as the Guaranteed Annual Wage, but hours of work, tenure, and so on.

Our position is that we want steady jobs rather than layoff pay. But in either case GE workers must have enough to live on.

Job insecurity is being promoted by the company. It is doing this by its run-away shop policy, by the continual speed-up, by automation, etc.

Our experience has led us to one conclusion on this matter: That employers will provide job security only when it is as expensive to lay us off as to keep us at work.

Our National Convention in St. Louis adopted a program on this question. We called for:

"1. The Guaranteed Annual Wage to maintain purchasing power during periods of layoff and to provide an incentive to employers to preserve full employment.

"2. Severance pay for employees permanently displaced because of automation or other causes.

"3. A reduction in the work week with no reduction in weekly pay."

This is a good basic program for our approach to GE. For GE, while it boasts of what it claims to have sponsored in 1903 or 1910, is far behind the parade today. For example, most of the basic industries such as steel, auto, farm machinery, rubber, aluminum, cans, non-electrical machinery have provided Supplementary Unemployment Benefits through their Union Contracts. In the electrical industry—except for a few companies—no such benefits exist.

We don't say that the present SUB is the right answer . . . What we do say is that GE has provided neither job security nor the means to enable a worker to live half decently when he is laid off.

Beyond this lies the broader question of job security—the need for a reduction in the hours of work.

We shall have to carry on a program of making clear this whole situation and not wait until 1958. GE employees are entitled to know the facts.

THE SECOND MAJOR TOPIC WE SHOULD CONSIDER IS AUTOMATION.

We are not against automation. We favor it. But we want to make sure that its benefits are distributed among all the people so that it will be a boon and not a curse. It will be up to us to make sure that this comes true.

We should study carefully the changes that need to be made in job descriptions, job evaluations, incentive systems, seniority, etc., in order to protect our people. Above all, we should insist upon adequate consultation prior to the introduction of the equipment on all problems that will arise.

We must prepare for a shorter work week—either through direct reduction in hours or perhaps longer weekends. For only in that way will the future tremendous flood of goods be matched with full production and full purchasing power.

THE THIRD PROBLEM IS THAT OF WAGE DIFFERENTIALS—either between male or female; or between workers doing the same kind of work in different plants.

Wage differentials are being wiped out in other industries. Many of these industries also provide for equal pay for equal or comparable work.

Tumult In Tyler

When it became obvious that Norman Eaton, head of GE's Community and Employee Relations in Tyler, Texas, wasn't doing a good enough job of "busting IUE" in the election campaign, GE gave him the old heave-ho.

Although Eaton has 32 years service with GE, the Plant Manager just walked up to him one day and said, "You're through". The Manager gave Eaton "sixty days to find another plant".

Eaton was replaced by his assistant, Charles Eckert. But Eckert couldn't do the job of busting IUE either, so they booted him too, and sent him "back to the pool in Schenectady".

If Eaton couldn't "bust IUE", it wasn't because he didn't try. He set a new record for anti-union viciousness. And Local 301 members will remember him as one of the worst union-haters, when he was in Wage Rates and Job Evaluation here in Schenectady up to a few years ago.

But in GE we have the sorry fact that area wage differentials are increasing as plants are established in the South or new non-industrial areas. In this field IUE has a job to do that is second to none.

You in the older plants know how important it is as the newer plants are established to compete with you. Our Contract provides the way to a remedy—the right to negotiate at any time on wage rates.

What we need is the cooperation of the older and the newer plants in a systematic attack on this problem. By a systematic attack I mean a planned set of demands in the locals that have sub-standard wages, and this being supported by the locals that have the higher wage rates.

The question of differentials between sexes also needs attention in the same way.

A number of our locals have been achieving success steadily by a constant attack on the problem.

NOW . . . THERE ARE OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES. For example, the defense of our wage standards against insidious attacks on the incentive system or speed-up devices. We must stand firm against them, shoulder to shoulder, since weakness will only promote further aggression against us.

We have made considerable progress in our internal Union strength. We stand united, we have a good program, and we can be prepared to move forward to achieve our goals.

To do this, we need to strengthen our membership rolls. There are still unfortunately too many GE workers who either have not yet been educated or persuaded that belonging to the Union is to their advantage. We know that we face on the part of the company a persistent, relentless campaign to persuade them that they do not need, indeed that they should not join, the Union.

The fact is that although GE is one of the few large companies that refuses to provide Union security, I know of few places where it is needed more than in GE!

Your idea of holding Grass Roots conferences among the GE locals in the near future is an excellent one and it might be well that we talk at this time of a schedule. Such conferences could not only help to clarify our thinking on the economic issues, but also—by drawing in people from the Shop Steward level—stimulate greatly an organizational drive.

In spite of our temporary difficulties, I have every confidence that we are going to move ahead in our program. I know it because it is a correct program and GE cannot stand out against the tide of the times. By pursuing this program with all the energies with which we are capable, I know that in the end we are bound to win.

LOCAL 301 NEWS

IUE AFL-CIO

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The Voice of GE Workers, Local 301, Schenectady, N. Y.

February 8, 1957

Toolmakers Blast GE 'Rate-Slashing Subterfuge'; Call for National Rally

A meeting of 200 Toolmakers from throughout the GE Works has demanded that GE stop its warfare against the wages and the conditions of Schenectady Toolmakers.

The toolmakers' rally was held at Union Headquarters Jan. 30. At that time the men protested the company's new policy of allocating toolmaking work to new classifications, which the company calls "Machinist Development" in order to get around paying toolmaking rates.

GE Guilty of 384-Hour "Stoppage" in Bldg. 66!

Whenever there is the least little bit of trouble in the plant and employes aren't right on top of the job, General Electric drags out its biggest loudspeakers and bellows from the rooftops that "the union is wrecking GE".

Even if GE has to lie to do it, the company runs its mimeograph machines overtime hollering "wildcat". It is GE's favorite weapon in its anti-union arsenal.

Remember the Bldg. 85 case where the company was at fault and the men were "down" only 20 minutes. You'd think that somebody had "pulled the plug" on GE's entire operations.

Well if the production-pluggers in GE are so seriously concerned with keeping men working, why in H— have they let such a condition develop as has happened in Bldg. 66.

Within the past two weeks 48 man days—384 HOURS—were lost simply because some supervisor fouled up in planning the work schedule.

After the mess developed the Union filed a grievance protesting the lost time. The Union representatives met with the general foreman who advised them that a rotation schedule would be in effect until the lack of work ceased.

This was unsatisfactory. It established lost time for a great per-

centage of the Assemblers and Welders over an indefinite period.

The Shop Steward and Executive Board Member requested a reduction in forces as provided for in the Contract. The Company refused this request.

Union Headquarters called Mr. Wassmansom, Union Relations representative for GE in the Large Motor-Generator Department. He claimed there was "no need" for a meeting to discuss this critical unemployment situation.

The Union then contacted Mr. Burrows, top Union Relations representative in the department, and explained the circumstances. He said he would "look into it".

After this contact, Mr. Wassmansom phoned Union Headquarters and said 24 man days—192 hours—would be lost "for a number of reasons".

In re-checking the Shop Steward and counting the actual number of people losing time, the Union found that Mr. Wassmansom's report was watered down by 50 percent.

Actually 48 man days were being lost.

Under Foreman Houck and Crandall in Bldg. 66 there are 26 Welders and Assemblers who have lost time in the past two weeks out of a total of 62 employes in these classifications. This does not take into account the 11 Welders loaned to Bldg. 60 during this same period.

The loaning of these additional Welders to #60 will cause a lack of work situation in this building within a short period of time.

On Tuesday of this week the Union was trying to arrange a meeting with the department manager without success. All the heads of Labor Relations for the company were out to a shindig at the Edison Club!!!

(Probably they were trying to dream up some new scheme to "whack the Union" and holler "wildcat". It seems that's the secret to success and promotion under Boulware.)

This run-around and refusal to discuss a critical grievance are violations of the contract, and are typical of cases that have been provocation for stoppages.

At the same meeting the Local 301 Toolmakers voted to petition the International to call a special conference of all GE toolmakers throughout the IUE chain.

The evening rally of Local 301 Toolmakers heard a report from C. Feenan (#273) who served as secretary of the meeting. A motion was passed to accept the report.

Brother Feenan disclosed that the company's attack against Toolmakers has been stepped up in recent months by the assignment of toolmaking work to new classifications. The favorite subterfuge is "Machinist Development Class A".

The rate for that classification is a step below Toolmaker Class B.

The extensive practice of this wage-cutting scheme of GE's has been exposed in recent months when Toolmakers have been moved out of Aeronautics and the Campbell Avenue Racetrack as a result of GE's "decentralization" policies.

When the Toolmakers—most of whom have many years service—move into new jobs they find how widespread has become GE's practice of avoiding the payment of Toolmaker rates.

Two fellow IUE members from Pittsfield, Local 255, attended the rally and told the Schenectady men they are having the same trouble in Pittsfield. They were Ralph Froio, vice-president, and George DePallazzo, Chief Steward. Both men are toolmakers.

The report presented by Brother Feenan indicated that the company (Continued on Page 3)

IS YOUR DEPT 100% UNION?

Use of Job Move to Camouflage Wage-Cutting Blocked by Union

Forceful action by Local 301 has stopped a G-E wage-cutting maneuver in the Motor Department dead in its tracks.

Target of the company's price slashing was the piece work rotor assembly job in Bldg. 89, which the company moved to Bldg. 81 on Feb. 3. The company's whole operation in Bldg. 81 is highly mechanized.

A couple weeks ago the company "notified" Shop Steward Armstrong, who leads the rotor assembly workers, that the job would be moved to Bldg. 81. And thereafter, R. Wukits declared, the work would be on day rates between \$1.85 and \$1.96.

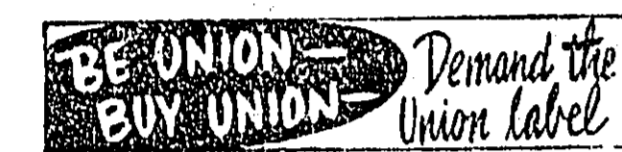
In view of the fact that the groups' piece work earnings had been substantially higher, such an arbitrary decision would have meant a sizeable slash in take-home earnings.

Brother Armstrong immediately invoked the Grievance Procedure. But Boss Wukits double-talked.

Finding Wukits' answer unsatisfactory, the Union took the case to

the management level. There Coordinator Bill Christman, Shop Steward Armstrong and Board Member DeGraff laid it on the line to the company in a meeting on Feb. 1.

It was then that Mr. Tyler, manager of that section in the motor department, backed down and said that the wage payment plan that had been in effect would remain in effect. He also agreed that the same men would stay on the job after the rotor assembly operation was moved to the new building.



Current Events In My Section

by ALLEN E. TOWNSEND

For the past few weeks we have been having trouble with the Company regarding the interpretation of the agreement in regards to transfers and upgradings in the Building Trades groups.

Several years ago these groups were all under one central head. In other words, any department who wanted work done by these groups contacted the central trades group who sent in tradesmen to do this work.

Recently the Company decentralized these groups, giving each large department their own trades group. It was at this time that the trouble began.

The Company then started a program of making the upgradings within each little group, ignoring the seniority plantwide.

This caused no end of trouble.

In September of 1954, the Company and the Union negotiated an agreement covering decentralization of the Building Trades. In this agreement it stated that upgrading and transfers would be handled on a plant-wide basis as in the past.

Lists were to be kept in Bldg. 1 governing upgradings and transfers. Full information on the status of the various groups and where each man stood for future upgrading was to be available to the Union at all times. In the past few weeks there has been a reluctance on the Company's part to furnish this information. In addition to this, they deny that they ever agreed to upgrade plantwide in the trades.

They take the position that tradesmen are entitled to upgradings in their own groups only. It would seem on the basis of what is happening the Company is trying to write a new supplement governing the trades.

A meeting of representative trades people is scheduled in Bldg. 41 this week to discuss this extremely critical situation.

Feb. 18 Membership Meeting To Hear Carey and Dedicate New Auditorium

A week from Monday is the February membership meeting. That is Monday the 18th.

Mark that date well on your calendar and plan to attend. For that membership meeting marks two important highlights in the affairs of Local 301:

1. The new Auditorium will be almost completely finished and officially dedicated.
2. International President James B. Carey will address both general membership meetings and will participate in the ceremonies dedicating the new Local 301 auditorium.

Although the January membership meeting was held in the new Auditorium, it was not officially opened inasmuch as work still remains

to be done on the heating and in completing the work necessary to provide good acoustics.

Also the new public address system and the new chairs will be installed for the meeting on the 18th.

Since President Carey addressed the Local 301 Executive Board meeting on Jan. 14 the General Electric Company has launched a vicious attack on our International President. Mr. Stevens' most recent letter to the community was obviously designed to smear Brother Carey in the eyes of the community and

prejudice whatever he may say in his address to the membership.

From the attention GE is giving President Carey it is obvious that the Company is worried that he might "hypnotize" Local 301 members.

It is easy to see why the IUE President has GE worried.

He will, no doubt, discuss employment security and the Union's reopening on that issue for chain-wide negotiations next year.

That GE will find this embarrassing is not surprising. If the company did a real job of providing year-round earn-

ings for its employes, there would be no dispute.

But the company's profit-max drive for more and more profits has brought about the run-away shop program which has resulted in thousands of lay-offs, transfers, down-gradings, rate-cuts and speed-ups for Schenectady GE workers.

This has forced the Union to act to protect the members. Any Union which disregarded this responsibility would not be worthy of the name.

Undoubtedly the IUE President will have some words to say about this.

Progressive Legislation in Albany Needs Your Help!

There is a good chance that the New York Legislature will enact several bills of great importance to working people.

However, the legislative proposals to accomplish liberal gains are now entering the "fighting" stage, and it is important that your legislators hear from you if these progressive pieces of legislation are to be enacted into law.

Bill Stewart, chairman of the Legislative Committee, has been in Albany from time to time during the session. He reports that the key pieces of legislation that labor is interested in are proposals by Governor Harriman to improve unemployment compensation and workmen's compensation coverage.

The Governor has recommended that unemployment compensation be increased to a maximum of \$45 a week and that the qualifying period be reduced to 15 weeks.

The Governor has also recommended that sickness and disability features of the law be broadened. He is urging the legislature to increase sickness benefits and to extend the coverage period from 15 to 26 weeks. On disability coverage, Harriman has endorsed an increase in the maximum weekly allowance for disability payments from \$40 to \$45, and extension of the coverage from 20 to 26 weeks.

The Governor has also spoken out for an increase in payments for temporary total disability. He recommended that the increase be from the present 66 and two-thirds percent of weekly salary to 75 percent of weekly salary, with minimum payments of \$36 a week. Brother Stewart reports that Samuel Greenberg, (Dem. Bklyn.) has introduced a bill that would encompass these recommendations.

Labor is also interested in liberalizing the present law covering disability by silicosis. As it stands now you are not considered "totally disabled" from silicosis until you're ready for the undertaker. And then, of course, you've had it.

Stewart says that the law should provide for payments for "partial disability".

These are the basic proposals that working people have a real stake in. Your legislators should hear from you so that they will not betray these important recommendations.

However, all is not favorable in Albany.

There is one especially vicious piece of legislation that has been introduced by a union-baiting Westchester Republican. That is Senate Bill #73 introduced by Pliny Williamson, which would practically wreck a Union whenever it had to strike.

That bill would permit a judge to issue an injunction in a labor dispute without holding a hearing. This same anti-union piece of legislation was introduced last year, but it wasn't even reported out of the Judiciary Committee.

Let your legislators and members of the Judiciary Committee know that the bill should get the same treatment this year. It's simply no good!

35 Industrial Control Employees Want Jobs

The Industrial Control Department once employed nearly 5,000 Schenectady G.E. workers.

Now, due to the transfer of this work by the Company to the South and other low paying sections of the country, there are approximately 35 hourly rated employees left in the department who must find jobs by February 21st, or they may be losing time.

Most of the remaining 35 employees have long service ranging up to 35 years with G.E. In most cases these members will be required to bump shorter service employees on jobs that will be suitable to their background and ability. It will mean a reduction in earnings to many of them, particularly to those who have been on incentive work.

The Union's Placement Committee has been pressing the management for information on jobs within our bargaining unit that would be comparable to the experience of these long service workers. Management has refused to give the Union committee such information; however, the Union is demanding that the Company offer these members suitable jobs according to the contract and without the need of losing time.

Value of Union Increases Daily

Like good wine, the value of Unions grows with age.

That is the conclusion of a Survey Team from the University of Minnesota. The Survey Team polled 1,251 Union members from 13 different labor organizations.

It found that: The longer a worker is employed in a Union shop, the better he likes it.

The longer a worker is a Union member, the more he grows to appreciate the Union and respect its accomplishments.

Newcomers to Unions are, generally, lukewarm to the organization.

Among those surveyed, 82 percent of the rank-and-file members agreed that they would have "little if any protection against the evils of job favoritism if it weren't for the Union. And 73 percent of the rank-and-file agreed that non-union worker should be expected to join regular Union fees if they receive Union rates of pay and Union conditions. Seventy-nine percent of the rank-and-file agreed that every worker should be expected to join the Union where he works.

Toolmakers ...

(Continued from Page 1) has advised Local 301 that the new Seniority Date for toolmakers to hold their classification will be Jan. 1, 1948.

Lou Miller (2273) presided at the meeting.

"Crooked Deals" Gyp Employees of Insurance Coverage — Callahan

"Working people have lost millions of dollars worth of benefits they should have received from their Health-Welfare Insurance and Pension Plans as a result of crooked deals engineered by a few influential people for the benefit of themselves."

With those words the Chairman of the IUE General Electric Conference Board, John Callahan, scorching the Insurance Industry and the Big Business outfits that combine to handle billions of dollars worth of Union-negotiated insurance "in the dark alleys of secrecy".

Callahan was testifying before the Massachusetts Committee on Labor and Industries on Jan. 31 in Boston. This Committee of the Mass. Legislature is holding hearings on a bill introduced in the Legislature that would require full public disclosure of all company-employee insurance plans.

The fact that it was the third time IUE had been invited to testify indicates the prestige the IUE spokesmen have gained in earlier hearings by their knowledgeable and factual presentations. It was these earlier hearings that elicited from GE the admission that every year for the past six years the company has received dividend "kick-backs" of \$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000 from the big insurance companies that handle the insurance plans covering GE employes.

Arbitration Forces GE's Hand in Bldg. 61

After Local 301 threatened to carry the case to Arbitration, General Electric has reversed its position and agreed to pay premium pay to 13 men on continuous operations at the Power Station in Bldg. 61.

The payment will range from four to eight hours of premium pay for all of the men, with most of them getting six hours.

This is Case #4914, which has been in issue for some time. Local 301 forced GE's hand by starting proceedings for Arbitration. The Arbitration meeting was all set up and Local 301 was prepared to go through with the case.

Then GE informed the Union it would "settle", without pursuing the case.

The letter from Leonard G. Curry, union relations man for SR&U, said the case would be closed on a "washout basis".

Mr. Curry would have been much more truthful if he'd admitted that GE was "backing out".

On Feb. 12, Remember—

"There has never been but one question in all civilization—how to keep a few men from saying to many men: You work and earn bread and we will eat it."

"I thank God that we have a system of labor where there can be a strike."

— ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Thought for the Day

If "Progress" is General Electric's "most important product", the "progress" must be the company's never-ending line of inventions to slash wages and speed-up production. Not a day goes by but what GE "patents" some new gimmick to get more production for less money.

NOTICE

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Union Headquarters

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1957

7:30 P.M.