

Industry Unites In Effort To Cut Compensation, Unemployment Benefits; Calls Awards "Sentimental"

Employer "Union" Campaigns To Undermine Gov't Programs

The Associated Industries of New York State, Inc., has opened an almost unbelievably callous campaign to take money from the pockets of injured and unemployed workers. The organization represents a union of some 73 industrial, business and trade associations.

G.E. Is A Member.

In an address at Latham, N. Y., this month, Douglas Hewitt, speaking for the Associated Industries, of which G.E. is a member, claimed that too often Workmen's Compensation awards are based on "sentimental or class-conscious reasons". He attacked the referees and judges making these awards, by claiming the attitude taken by them while "superficially appearing to be sympathetic, is fundamentally immoral". "There's no future for any industrial community", he said, "that gives Workmen's Compensation awards for minor facial scratches, or other injuries not related to loss of earnings, or which in any other way confuses the system of production and exchange with the desire to redistribute the wealth."

To show the ridiculousness of any threat to the future of industry through Workmen's Compensation awards one need only point to the record of a Company such as G.E., which year after year consistently shows record profits and increased expansion. The program of Industry as a whole toward decentralization and automation, with the resulting unemployment, indicates little danger of any wealth being redistributed.

Individuals Unimportant

Two Workmen's Compensation cases, on file at the Union office, are given on this page in commenting further on the Association's attitude which would seem to be — more profits and the people be damned.

Take the case of Katherine B., the "sentimental" referee in this case awarded \$750.00 for this serious and permanent facial disfigurement. Katherine can still work, but can any amount of money, let alone \$750.00, compensate for these scars? Would one of these industrial critics, if he were to be involved in an auto accident and receive facial scars to this extent, settle for \$750.00?

During the entire year of 1954, there were 63 facial awards against G.E. for Local 301 members at an average of \$188.45 each! This is a threat to G.E.'s future? Absurd of course!

Take the case of Malcolm H., for the 80 painful weeks after this accident at work, during which he, of course, was unable to work, he was paid \$2560. That means he now has coming to him under the law, \$32.00 a week for 231 weeks, but, of course, he has no right leg for the rest of his life. A "sentimental and class-conscious" award?

These are only two example cases out of the thousands on file at the IUE Local 301 office.

Profits vs. People

These companies carry insurance or are self-insured to pay for these awards made by law and obviously the cost of the insurance is included in their prices. Of course, if they could cut benefits, thereby reducing the cost of insurance, they could swell their profits just that much more.

Example Cases Of Workmen's Compensation Awards:

Case of: Malcolm H.

Patient was caught between a battery truck and a wall.

Report of medical examination by State's doctor:

"Right leg was amputated just above the knee. Stump is well healed. Wears a prosthesis which, apparently is satisfactory. Schedule loss is 100% of right leg."

Award:

For 100 per cent loss of right leg, plus 23 weeks protracted temporary disability, for a total of 311 weeks computed at \$32.00 per week.

Case of: Catherine B.

Allergic dermatitis of the face, related to her work.

Report of Medical examination by State's doctor:

"Exam reveals multiple pigmented scars on left cheek, chin, right cheek, outer forehead and right side of neck. These scars are permanent."

Award:

\$750 for serious and permanent facial disfigurement.

These are just two cases of the many on file at the Union office, handled by IUE Local 301's attorney. These are typical of the Workmen's Compensation awards being labelled by Industry as "sentimental", "class-conscious" and a threat to the future of industry. These types of awards they claim show a desire to redistribute the wealth.

These same industries will boast of their sense of responsibility, their deep concern for the welfare of the worker — but you can hardly find those kind these days — everybody knows that.

Unemployment and Compensation Benefits, Industry's Targets

The same holds true, of course, if they could succeed in cutting unemployment benefits. Therefore, the Association, in their unlimited greed, has begun a campaign for legislation to do just that. On January 16, the State Conference of Unemployment Insurance representing the Associated Industries opened their campaign for further cuts in unemployment insurance benefits, calling for legislation to bar "windfall profits."

Remember Hughes-Brees Amendment

Not satisfied with the limitations and restrictions already imposed on the unemployed worker by the Hughes-Brees Amendment, this organization has outlined an eight point legislative program of proposals it says will close "loopholes" in the present law. John A. Williams, chairman of the conference, stated that "loopholes in the law permit some people to reap windfall profits in unemployment insurance." "Such payments," he said, "constitute a substantial sum and a serious drain on the State's unemployment insurance fund." The conference "estimated" that approximately 27c out of every dollar paid, jobless benefits in 1954 went to persons who were not looking for jobs. This "estimate" is based on the Conference's own imagination, not official figures. The very reasons given for the estimate show the figure to be imaginative and not based on fact.

Penalize Pensioners

One person in four who drew benefits, the conference stated, was not working because he quit his job, was engaged in a labor dispute, was discharged for misconduct, went on vacation with pay or was retired on pension.

We all know, of course, that unemployment benefits are not paid to a worker on vacation with pay which shows the extent of distortion this outfit will go to. And a good many of us know Pensioners who have experienced difficulty in receiving benefits under the present law, while trying to obtain some work to supplement their inadequate old age benefits.

Obviously this Association, in relation to their profits, would put injured and retired workers in the same category as worn out machines.

Profits and Patriotism

These are the industries, then, that will shout of their patriotism to the Government, will shout of their deep concern for the welfare of communities, while at the same time they are carrying on a campaign to undermine the Government's programs to throw the responsibility to the communities for injured and unemployed workers.

G.E. is a member of this union of industries while at the same time it tells the workers — you don't need a union! Obviously, it is because they know it is your Union, along with other Unions, that will fight to block vicious schemes such as these. Because your Union will also have representatives in Albany and in Washington to bring the true picture to your legislators.

Your Union is pledged to fight, and with your support can win, against this program of greedy industries for "more profit — and the people be damned."

LOCAL 301 NEWS

IUE CIO

Vol. 1 — No. 42

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

February 11, 1955

Editorial . . .

Company officials of late seem to be going to great lengths to impress Schenectady workers that there is a secret "stoppage button" up at Union Hall. They would have you believe that all a Union official does is press this button and presto—a whole group stops work. He presses it again and presto—they're all back to work.

Any Union member who has ever been a party to a grievance, and from the records it appears that most members have, knows the ridiculousness of such propaganda. They know further that they take no orders from Union officials and that the only things their Union officials gain from work stoppages are a lot of abuse and additional hard work.

Many members are beginning to wonder just what does the Company gain by work stoppages? Foremen do take orders, as all members know, and are in a position to negotiate with their shop steward so as to avoid these crises until Union officials have the opportunity to reach a settlement with management. Instead they see these same foremen, on questions of safety, violations of seniority, arbitrary price cuts and downgrading, take a position — do it or else! Management then follows up with — we won't even talk about it — and regardless of the issue they must return to work — then we will talk about it — at our convenience.

Now wouldn't it be a big help to Mr. Boulware if the Schenectady plant were to go on strike over some pin point issue involving only a few people? If Schenectady workers could be forced now to lose many weeks of pay over a small issue, mightn't it take all the fight out of them for Contract Negotiations in September? And if there was no militancy in Schenectady, the largest IUE Local in the G.E. Chain, mightn't Boulware then be able to throw out the same crumbs at the negotiating table as he's done for 5 years?

Yes, the Union members know that no Union official can give them orders, but they do know their foremen take orders. Who do you think has the "stoppage button"?

The New Look . . . GE "Blueletters"

See Pages 2-3

Shop Steward Certificate

LOCAL 301

IUE-CIO

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Shop Steward

Bldg.-----has attended Shop Steward Classes for the year, 1955.

J. COGNETTA, President

M. MOON, Rec. Sec'y

All Shop Stewards attending the Stewards' classes being held at Union Headquarters this month will receive a certificate of attendance as shown above. This card attests to your Steward's sincerity and interest in his duties, and that he has sacrificed the time necessary to familiarize himself with the responsibilities of his important role as a Union official. Ask your Shop Steward to show you his card.

24 Years of Loyal Service Pays Off With Wage Cut for Lathe Operator

A good example of GE's appreciation for long and faithful service is demonstrated in the case of Adam Glover, a Class "A" Lathe Operator in Bldg. 17.

Adam has been employed by the company for 24 years and has been a Lathe Operator for 14 years. He held his present classification of Class "A" for over 5 years. Glover had been a Shop Steward for 4 years up until the last election.

Department Bulletins

He was notified by his foreman on January 31, that his wages would be cut 16c an hour and he would be demoted to a Class "B" classification, because his output and performance were not satisfactory, the cut to be effective Monday, February 7. The employees in Bldg. 17, after hearing about the case, stopped work in protest. Glover is employed in the Tool Room which has a record of no stoppages for many years; however, this action jolted every day worker who could obviously see that any one of them could be next. The management's representatives immediately got busy through department bulletins and personal contact, trying to justify to the employees in other departments and to the public that their actions were right. In explaining their position, they claimed they were lenient with 50-year old Glover because they had warned him that he had to work harder and produce more. They even claimed the stoppage of work by department employees was only a planned action by Union officials that coincided with the "No Contract—No Work" campaign. The Union officials advised the members in the Induction Motor Department to go back to work because the management refused to discuss the case until they were working. The mem-

(Continued on Page 4)

Local 301 IUE-CIO MEMBERSHIP MEETING

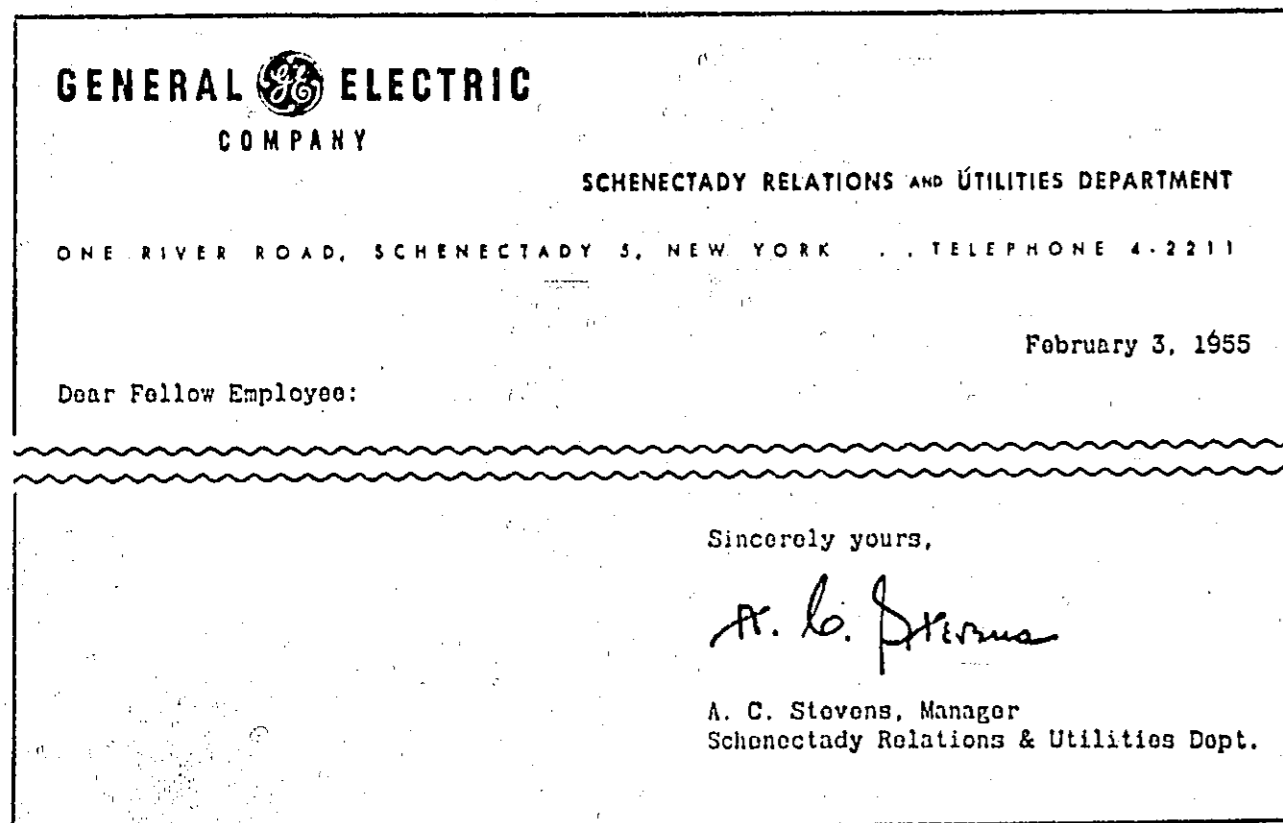
Monday, February 21
2nd Shift — 1:00 P.M.
(Before Work)

1st & 3rd Shifts—
7:30 P.M.
LOCAL 301 HALL

Reports of Committees
Regular Order of Business
EXECUTIVE BOARD
LOCAL 301 IUE-CIO

Signed: Comrade-at-Arms
Digger O. Dell

Boulevard Blueletters Begin In Schenectady

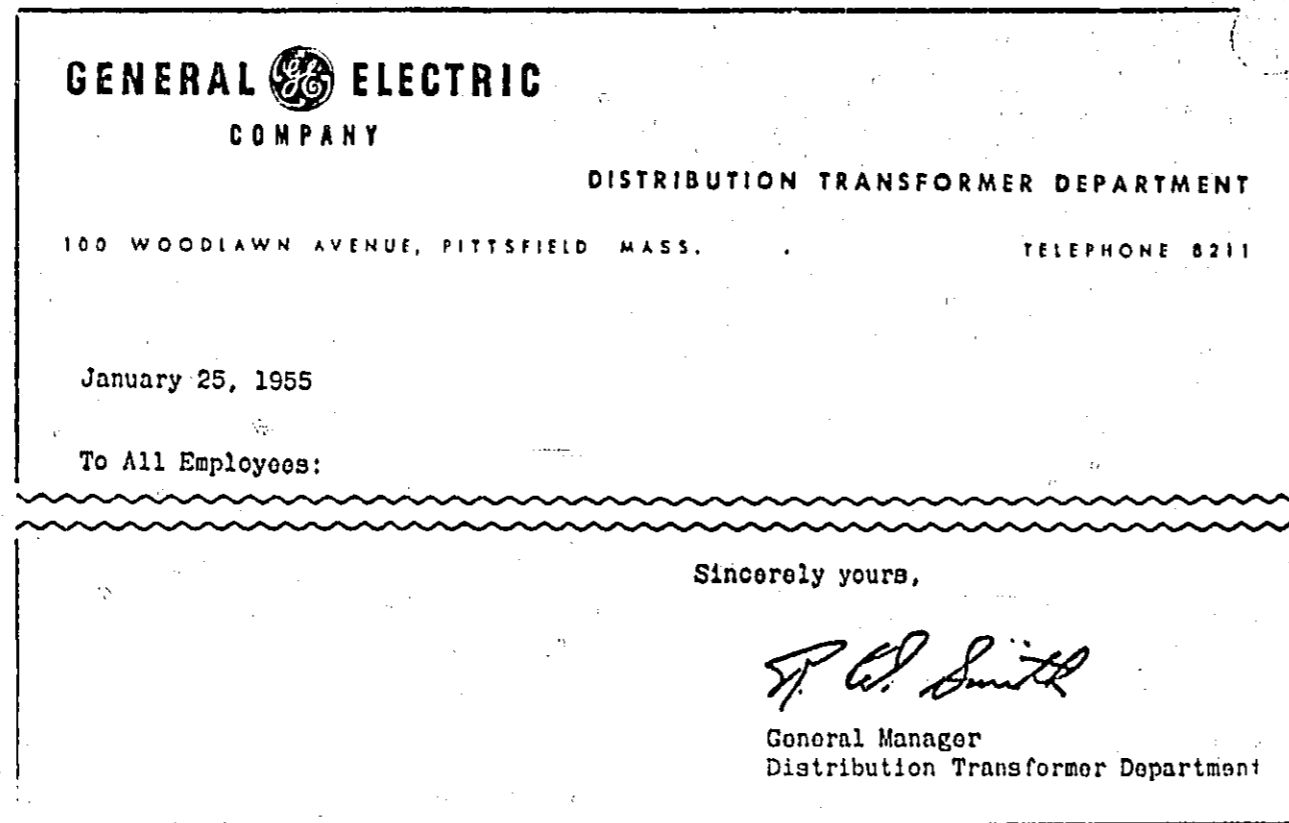


Like every other G.E. department manager, Mr. Stevens has been instructed to carry out the instruction of the New York office of General Electric, handed down by the GE's Chief of Labor and Public Relations — propaganda to cover up the actions, plans and real program of G.E. Mr. Stevens, like every other manager, is making a miserable attempt to cause disunity among Union members by condemning the Union leadership and at the same time telling the community that the Union causes work stoppages that would discourage new business coming to Schenectady. In his last News Letter he referred to a work stoppage that resulted instantaneously after a 24-year employee had been notified he would receive a 16c an hour cut because he did not produce enough. The Union leadership requested the employees to go back to work pending a meeting with management. Stevens indicated in true Boulevard form that this stoppage was part of a pattern of Union activity. The fact that employees are threatened by removal from their jobs if they do not meet piece work quota for day wages in Bldg. 85 is provocation of the worst type, causing work stoppages.

These are only two examples of the hundreds of complaints that are referred to the Union officials for solution. Every one is initiated by representatives of management. While Mr. Stevens sings the blues in the News Letter to all employees, saying he is officially worried about the work status in the community, he does not mention the company's plan to transfer the entire Control Department out of Schenectady, which will displace 4,000 men and women from work. He does not mention the transfer of other work from Schenectady in the past 18 months and not because of labor trouble or Union leaders — it was transferred solely for what G.E. calls "Balanced Best Interest" or in more simple language — more profit.

We wonder if Mr. Stevens can blame the Union because 3,500 employees were transferred to other jobs because of lack of work which resulted in a reduction in their wages in many instances. And we wonder why he does not spare some of that blue colored paper of his News Letter to talk about what is happening to the 3,000 and more employees who were laid off during 1954. The answer to these questions is obvious — they are not really interested in the employees' welfare. The Company's first and last interest is in itself, and, in order to do that job successfully, it must destroy the Union.

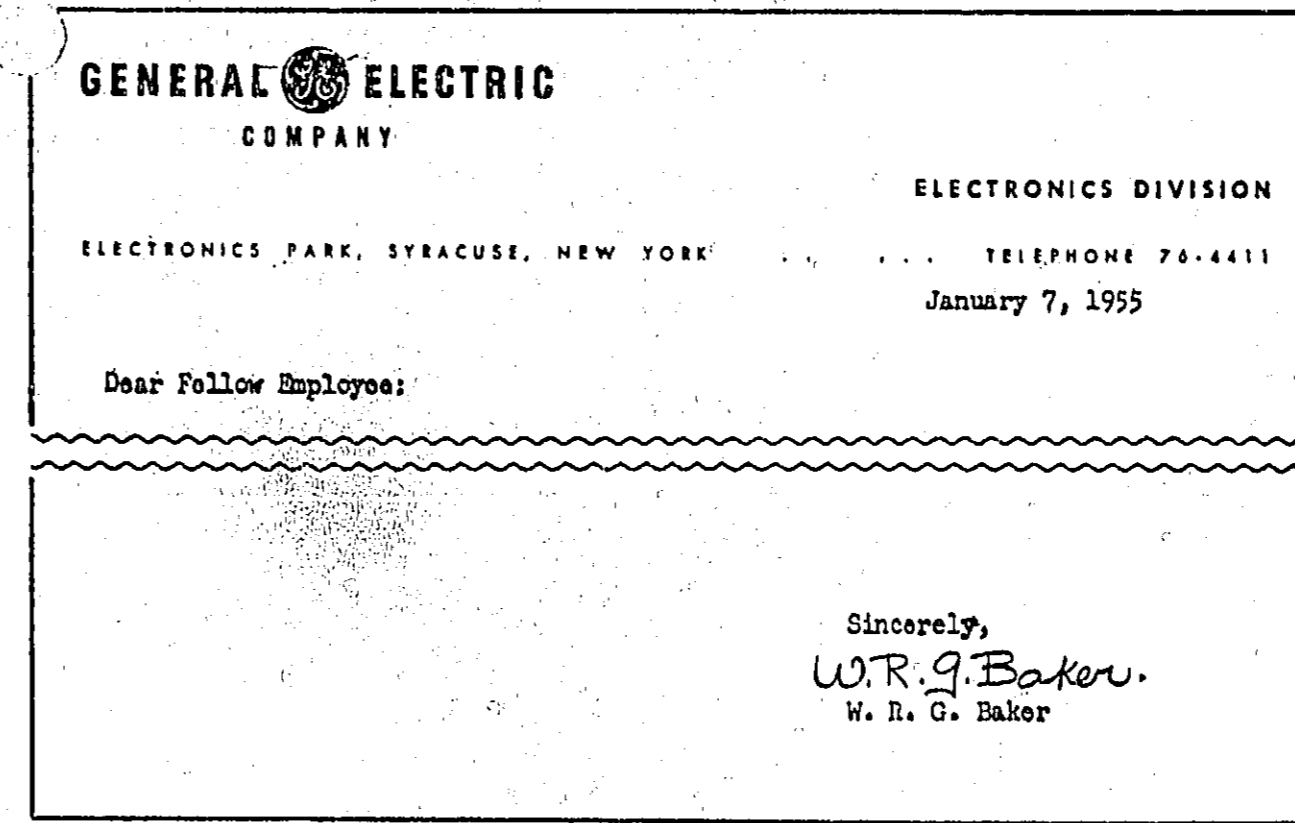
We suggest they stop predicting there will be a strike and spend more effort in trying to prevent one. This can be accomplished by stopping the present program of attack on prices, wages and general working conditions. And lastly, make an attempt to give honest recognition to the employees' demands through sincere collective bargaining on Contract issues next September.



Mr. R. W. Smith, the Manager of the G.E. plant in Pittsfield cries the blues in a News Letter that is similar to the letters sent by other department managers. He is worried in the very same, identical way that all the other G.E. managers are worried, and that is — maybe G.E. workers are getting ready to protect themselves from the attack by National G.E. against their wages and working conditions.

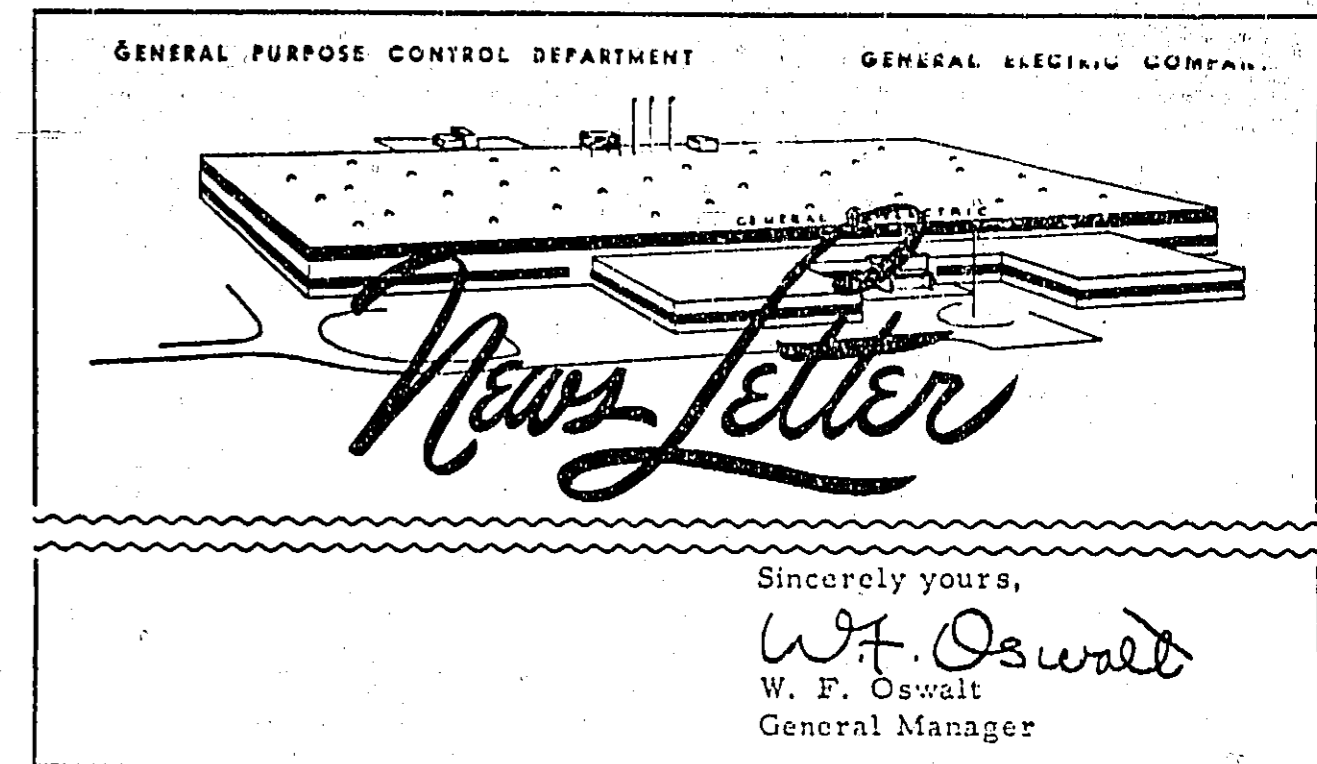
Manager Smith from Pittsfield spends most of his blue propaganda letter in worrying about a strike next September, but not one word on how to prevent it. He claims he worried about how the strike vote will be taken and whether the Union Hall will be large enough for everyone who may want to present. His letter campaigns for a No Strike Vote and expresses deep sympathy with the community of Pittsfield. He never mentions the recent transfer of the transformer work from Pittsfield to Rome, Georgia, which caused the displacement of many Pittsfield G.E. workers. His sympathies with Pittsfield are as shallow as his sympathies for G.E. workers in that city.

He has been instructed, along with every other G.E. manager, to start a propaganda campaign to weaken the G.E. workers by causing disunity in their ranks. The National G.E. management under the direction of Boulevard has snapped the whip and every department manager is obliged as a condition of employment to dip his quill in vitriol and start writing.



Mr. W. R. G. Baker, Manager of the Syracuse G.E. plant, stated in his letter to the employees that it has come to his attention that Union members were considering a resolution to the effect that "if there was not a contract in effect, there will not be any work". There is no question about his notification — Boulevard and National G.E. saw to that. His letter, like all other G.E. managers, talked Strike Vote, explained how he thought it should be done and where it should be done. Never one word on how to resolve the problems that may cause labor trouble. It is strange how G.E. managers will become so democratic with procedures and become so humanitarian about the welfare of employees when the employees decide they have had enough and prepare to fight back. Mr. Baker would not blink an eye about employees complaining about the low rates in Syracuse and the amount of effort required from employees who work on the conveyor lines producing televisions. Mr. Baker seems to forget that conditions were so bad in Syracuse G.E. that the employees stopped work not so long ago and the plant was shut down for several weeks.

The facts are the Syracuse manager is doing his job loyally for National G.E. as a condition of employment. He is spreading anti-Union propaganda under the instructions of Mr. Boulevard, hoping to weaken any fight by causing disunity among Union members.



Mr. W. F. Oswalt, Manager of the G.E. Company's General Purpose Control Department, issued a News Letter and made an honest statement concerning the National G.E. plan, directed by Mr. Boulevard, to break Unions. He sent letters to all the employees who are employed in Bloomington, Ill., and gave 8 reasons why G.E. employees do not need a Union.

Mr. Oswalt did not double talk like the usual G.E. department head — he made it very clear in his News Letter that the Company gave everything that a Union could achieve. As a matter of fact, says Oswalt, employees do much better without a Union. Mr. Oswalt claims the Company is completely dedicated to the policy of doing what is right VOLUNTARILY. Well, apparently Ossie has not been around very long. He may be the type that always looks ahead and gambles on the future and doesn't believe in taking advantage of past experience. Mr. Oswalt may yet still have been in his shell, but prior to the G.E. workers having a Union, there were absolutely no seniority rights; there were general wage cuts; there were no general wage increases, there were cancellations of vacation plans and many other things that forced G.E. workers to form a Union.

If Mr. Oswalt has his way, there will not be a Union in Bloomington, Ill. Mr. Oswalt will set the clock back 18 years for G.E. workers in that plant. Mr. Oswalt will produce the same product in Bloomington that Schenectady G.E. workers produced in the Control Department — only they will not pay the same wages and prices in Bloomington. That is why Mr. Oswalt is trying in his propaganda News Letter to keep the Union out. Thank God the National IUE-CIO has an organizer working on the G.E. plant in Bloomington. The Manager of the G.E. plant in Rome, Ga., tried the same tactics in an attempt to keep the G.E. workers in that city from joining a Union, but it did not work. There they are organized and members of IUE-CIO.

1955 — THE YEAR OF DECISION

Faced with the determination of the vast majority of G.E. workers in IUE-CIO, G.E. is daily becoming more disturbed that this year it will have to share some of its record profits with the workers. This is evidenced by the rising flow of "blueletters" and other attempts to lull communities to sleep with a magic violin.

CREEPING BOULWAREISM

For the past 5 years, honest collective bargaining has been denied G.E. workers, as Boulevard took ruthless advantage of their disunity, to the Company's profit, at the workers expense. Having been hired to do just that, his usefulness to G.E. will end unless he could continue his record. Yes, Lemuel is on a spot, and must make a desperate attempt to destroy the growing unity of G.E. workers. So we have the birth of the blueletter as various Plant Managers are forced to promote "Boulwareism" in an effort to weaken our ranks by confusion, distortion and outright falsehoods. After 5 years of handing out crumbs at the Contract Negotiations Table to the various Unions involved Boulevard now faces the decision of over 100,000 G.E. workers in IUE-CIO to fight for their rights.

BETTER BALANCED INTERESTS

In a booklet entitled "Year-End Review", issued by National G.E., with tongue to cheek, they talk of a new policy of

doing right voluntarily. Now if you're a G.E. employee, you are supposed to believe that you are an important factor in this program of Better Balanced Interests. Yet they admit in this very same booklet, that even their own foremen just couldn't believe the company would follow such a policy. And further developments, especially here in Schenectady, have proven that their foremen were correct in this instance. Take, for example, the nine point job package they have listed to be done voluntarily. Point number 5 is "Steady Work"! Schenectady workers as they see work being transferred to lower wage areas for the sole purpose of profit are not being added by Boulevard's Better Balanced Interests.

RECORD OF CHISELLING

G.E. never did do the right thing voluntarily when they had the opportunity, as they admit, and the record shows. Old-timers in the shop remember when there was no Union, and they were ruled by the iron fist, forced to accept pay cuts, losing vacations, and seniority meant who could stay in the good graces of the foreman longest. Newer employees remember being chiselled out of holidays that fell on Saturday, know pensioners who were denied the Social Security increases.

Since the Union has been organized, G.E. workers know

(Continued on Page 4)

THE BLUELETTER ACT . . .

