

... ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS ...

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UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO & MACHINE WORKERS
OF AMERICA, LOCAL 301
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are checked with our records, in order to eliminate any discrepancy between the office records and the individual dues payments.

A complete record is kept of the dues payments of the dues collectors, commissions paid, lost time paid shop committeemen, and the bonus paid on lost time.

Complete records and histories of all grievances are kept in our files for future references.

The headquarters makes complete arrangements for departmental socials and meetings, prepares notices, admission tickets, and orders refreshments, etc.

We maintain three weekly labor information services which are checked by your full time officers for any changes or developments in labor legislation that might affect the welfare of our Union.

Three thousand eight hundred and forty pieces of correspondence were received and answered during the past year outside of the correspondence between the headquarters and our representatives and dues collectors. 11,400 letters of instructions or information were sent to our dues collectors and shop committeemen.

The administrative offices have been extensively altered and the routine of the officers and personnel have undergone several changes in order to cope with the rapid growth of the Union.

Negotiations With Local Management:

The executive board had 70 meetings with the management and discussed approximately 700 cases. These cases required investigation, formulating the facts in writing and lengthy discussions with the management before final disposition could be reached. In some cases several meetings would be necessary before a final settlement could be reached.

Much of the contact with the management on emergency and less complicated cases are done by the phone; record is also kept of these cases which numbered 418 during the year.

Making the total cases discussed with the management for the year, 1,118. The breakdown of these is as follows:

Working Conditions
Transfers
Re-employment
Retirement
Service Restored
Community Rate Survey
Representation
Time Study and Prices
Individual Rates

The 342 cases on individual rates resulted in many increases in the plant during the year.

Many cases of wage rates were discussed affecting occupations, outlines of some of which follow:

Toolmakers—The toolmakers drafted a five-point program and presented it to the management. The case covered conditions and wages affecting the craft. Standard rates were agreed upon for apprentices, graduating, and after graduation. A new top rate was established of \$1.25 per hour. The increase affected 170 toolmakers, bringing the average earnings for this group from \$1.07 to \$1.10.

Other general adjustments were: Electricians, millwrights, screw machine set-up, steamfitters, cranemen, set-up machines ref., lathe hands, turbine inspectors.

The number of employees on the factory and maintenance payroll as of November 1940, was approximately 15,000. This is an increase of 5,707. The total was 9,293 in November 1939. These figures represent approximately 60% increase in factory employment. With the new help it is a problem getting the proper breaking-in rates established, and making sure they are being brought along in accordance with their increased efficiency.

Even though the increase in help was large, the average earnings for the plant did not drop as much as was expected. The average earnings as of November 1940 shows the following:

	Net	Gross
Men	87.4	96.8
Young Men	55.1	60.2
Female	56.2	59.4

Including cost of living, overtime, etc.

Unemployment Insurance:

The administration of your Union fully took care of all the pensioners in regard to receiving 13 weeks unemployment insurance. It was through the efforts of Local 301 that the State Attorney General's Office originally made the decision to pay pensioners unemployment insurance.

Compensation Cases:

Many members of the Union who were unfortunate to injure themselves on their jobs were given full advice and counsel by the Union in order that their interests be fully protected.

Permanent Organizing Committee:

A permanent organizing committee of 10 shop representatives chosen on a geographical plant basis has been formed. The executive board, with the approval of the general membership, has selected the best material available. The job of this committee is one of the most important of the Union, that is, organizing the unorganized. The unorganized G-E employees are a constant menace to the tremendous gains we have won through the efforts of our members.

The work of this committee will have to develop more into the

nature of the supervisory rather than detail. The committee's work will be to seek and involve key men in the unorganized sections to carry on the work; and to keep a constant check on these newly organized sections. The committee will have to work closely with the financial secretary, who will supply progress reports to the committee. We urge all of our members and shop representatives to give the members of this committee their cooperation and support, and we pledge the committee our fullest cooperation, and request them to meet with the executive board whenever it is necessary. This committee is already showing good results. Many new members have been brought into the Union from the Motor department through its efforts.

Activities Committee:

The Activities Committee of our Local conducted several successful affairs during the past year, but the work was done by too few people. Our Activities Committee has the potentiality of becoming the most important committee of our Union. As our Union becomes better established and we taper off into routine, it becomes a necessity to go into a broad social program. We must become more and more an integral part of the complete social life of our community if we are to successfully carry on. The general condition of our Union and the sound reputation it has established as an organization fully aware of its responsibilities to its members as well as the community, makes the time ripe for immediate expansion into this field of activities. The Activities Committee must broaden itself, and take the initiative in this work. The officers and executive board cannot take an active part in this program other than giving the Committee its fullest support, as these officers are now fully loaded with work and responsibilities. The key job of the present Activities Committee will be to involve members with lots of tact and patience.

The goal and ambition of this committee must be to bring the social activities now practiced by our members outside into the Union.

Dancing Class:

Sister Belle Baxter has given our Union a shining example of what can be done along social activities. In her quiet, unobtrusive manner, she has single-handedly organized dancing classes among the children of our members, which classes have put on shows for many of our departmental socials. Her pupils participated as a Local 301 group in the recent Community Carol Singing on the City Hall steps and stole the show. We promise Miss Baxter every encouragement in her fine work.

House Committee:

Your officers extend their personal as well as the thanks of the Union to our house committee which has given us splendid service and cooperation. During the past year, 328 departmental meetings, 149 executive board meetings, 318 shop committeemen meetings, 14 general membership meetings and 248 committees from the shops and otherwise held meetings in our headquarters. Members of our house committee have been on the job every night keeping order; they have also planned and supervised all renovations and installing of new equipment for our headquarters.

Educational Program:

Your officers initiated an intensive six weeks training course for committeemen and dues collectors in the early part of the past year which has shown very good results in the better handling of Union problems by our shop representatives. This kind of educational program will be gone into more extensively during the coming year.

Training for Defense Program:

The Local has actively participated in organizing classes for vocational training for our defense program. Many of our unemployed members were placed in vocational schools and were given mathematical and mechanical training, and have been placed on jobs. We are now in the process of organizing classes in blueprint reading and mathematics for our members in the shops who wish to develop themselves along these lines.

Arrangements have already been made to take care of the members who have applied and these members will be notified by mail by the middle of the week, as to their schedules.

Local News Organ:

With the growth of our Union more and more attention must be paid to our Local Electrical Union News. Its reception by our members has been very good and it is now in big demand. Your officers promise you that the necessary steps will be taken to bring this Local organ to our members more regularly.

The first step to be taken will be to organize responsible shop reporters who will furnish news for our paper. The nature of the paper will have to develop more along the lines of shop gossip. An excellent example has been given by the reporting of Building No. 12 News by Brother Geersen, Building 37 by Brother Schoeffler and Building 10 by Brother White. If the material comes in regularly to Union headquarters, the mechanical problem of the paper can be overcome, but the administration cannot manufacture shop gossip.

Selective Draft and Conscription:

Upon the Selective Draft law going into effect your Union immediately took steps to protect the interests of our members affected; after negotiations with the company on this question we won the following concessions:

1—That profit-sharing would be paid to conscripts when declared and sent to them.

2—Conscripts drafted before vacation period will be paid vacation allowance on pro rata share.

Through the efforts of our Union, two officers were appointed members of the local draft board and State appeals board, thereby giving our members as full a representation as possible.

The appointments to the draft boards do not carry any remuneration.

COMMENTS ON PROGRESS

After reviewing some of the gains won through the united effort of our membership, we want to state that we have not done the 100% job expected of us by a certain small unreasonable segment of our membership.

Gauging our organized strength—and we still have a 5,000 unorganized potential membership in the Schenectady plant—and

the fact that no Schenectady G-E employee lost a minute through strike action during the past four years, since we became the bargaining agency, the gains won have been considerable.

Your officers and executive board hereby declare that they will not be stamped into any ill-advised action through threats of any members or groups of members—to tear up their Union books. Your officers will absolutely refuse to give consideration to any question whatsoever under such a threat. We say to these shortsighted members: "Our Union and its leadership has proved its responsibility to its membership, and we stand one hundred per cent on our record."

We further tell these members to look at the working conditions and weekly "take home" of the employees in the poorly organized shops, and take heed.

Our international office has stated over and over again that our Local No. 301 has won more concessions for its G-E members than any other Local in the U. E.

Today our Local has come out of its trial period . . . we have established ourselves through the hard work and sacrifice of our shop representatives and officers . . . we have no apologies to make . . . and we are proud of the job we have done. We have established our Union in the hearts of the great majority of the Schenectady G-E Workers, and it is to them that we shall give account of our stewardship.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Due to the large defense program orders received by the General Electric Company, the Local plant is expected to operate at full capacity for the next two years. This will necessitate the building of new shops locally, and the hiring of thousands of new employees.

Labor during the coming months must have two primary objectives regarding its welfare. First, constant vigilance must be exercised to protect the hard-won legislative gains which have been made during the past few years. Second, labor must continue to march onward with a legislative program calling for extended social and progressive legislation for the protection of the people of the nation. These problems will arise in relation to both federal and state legislation.

Thus far, labor has been able to maintain existing labor standards without being able to make any substantial new gains.

We must recognize that in the coming years the basic problems having a necessary impact upon future legislation, will center about the protection of democratic institutions and civil rights and economic security for young and old.

It is clear that we cannot simply maintain the status quo, but that we must go forward to reach a solution to the fundamental problems that have confronted us for the past ten years. The impact of the European War on this hemisphere has in no way altered the nature of the problems confronting us. It may perhaps have given them new forms, but it has also made them more urgent than ever before.

Every one of our past problems still faces us: the economic insecurity for millions, the necessity for collective bargaining and federal labor standards, the extension of social security, the reshaping of our tax structure according to ability to pay, and above all, the necessity for putting our economy upon a full time expanding basis.

It has made collective bargaining essential as the only socially desirable method of conducting industrial relations. It has made wage-hour standards and social security indispensable to assure an increasing purchasing power for the workers to meet their needs. We must revamp our tax laws so that the pressing need of public finances will not lay a crushing burden upon consumer incomes.

By concretely realizing our objectives, we can take hold of the rapid and dynamic flow of events and see to it that the interests of the American people govern the course of our future policies. First, we must see to it that our capacity to produce is utilized to the fullest, not for the sole purpose of producing armaments, but also to produce the commodities of our basic industries that go into the American standards of living and provide jobs for the presently unemployed workers.

Secondly, we must recognize that adequate wage and hour standards have to be maintained, and collective bargaining securely established so that there will be an adequate distribution of wages to provide mass purchasing power. The right of the people to exercise freedom of speech, of press, of assembly, of worship, and to organize into free unions must not be abridged but ever more securely protected.

Thirdly, the national defense program has made it clear that prices have to be kept under control. The government, in an informal and unofficial way, through the use of its bargaining power, the anti-trust laws and public opinion, is now purporting to exercise pressure upon industry to keep the prices of our basic commodities down and prevent price rises that would eat up purchasing power. But more effective measures are essential. At the same time we must insist that our financial system respond quickly and flexibly to meet the demands of industry for credits to purchase materials, pay wages, and keep inventories.

In short, the policies of American industry, which have hitherto been under exclusive control of a few owners and their bankers, must be made subject to the necessities of the public interest and the welfare of the American people. It is along the lines of these potential developments that labor must exert its pressure both so that existing standards can be maintained, and that, more important, we can move forward to the solution of our fundamental economic problems.

Out of the abundance of materials, man power and equipment with which this country is endowed, we can create and maintain a standard of living under democratic institutions that will be a beacon to a troubled world.

ANTI-LABOR PROPAGANDA

Our people during the coming year will have to be very wary of Anti Labor propaganda in the country's newspapers and radios. We shall not allow ourselves to be cowed by this propaganda which calls Union men radicals and foreign agents who strike for more than 50c per hour.

William M. Leiserson of the National Labor Relations Board

answers these charges very concisely in an article in the Sunday New York Times of January 12th. We quote:

"Strikes in defense industries have excited the public mind and many suggestions are being made to cope with labor disputes. They run from postponement of strike action for a cooling-off period to a strict ban against strikes in the defense industries, with compulsory arbitration. Some of the proposals already have been embodied in bills now before Congress."

Contrary to popular belief, however, there is nothing like an epidemic or wave of strikes at the present time. The so-called "Outbreak" of strikes which is causing so much public concern appears to be somewhat like Lincoln Steffens' crime wave, which turned out to be only an increase in the diligence of newspaper men reporting crime news. The time lost in 1940 because of strikes was only about one-half of the 1939 figure.

The increased concern about strikes, therefore, is not because of any increase in strikes. On the contrary, the decline in strikes is most encouraging, and care must be exercised to insure against reversing what may be a significant trend toward fewer strikes.

Strikes are front page news nowadays because of their relation to production for national defense, but there is essentially nothing new in the current discussions. Force as a medium for settling labor disputes usually is suggested during critical times. Whenever strikes vitally affect public interests there is agitation for legal prohibition. It was that way in the World War but when machinery for handling industrial disputes was devised it was based largely on voluntary action with a minimum of legal force.

For force, whether exercised by the government or by private parties, does not settle labor disputes and will not bring sustained and efficient production. A law that restricts or abridges the right to strike without providing machinery for prompt handling of grievances and just demands of working people is bound to result in discontent if not in open disobedience of the legal mandate to work. Neither result will bring the production the nation needs. On the other hand, if machinery is provided for prompt adjustment of grievances and negotiation of reasonable demands, then legal compulsion to remain at work is unnecessary. Men work best without compulsion, and willing workers bring the greatest and most efficient production.

Laws to prohibit strikes do not prevent them. The experience of Australia with compulsory arbitration and our own Kansas Industrial Court law made this abundantly clear. Under both systems long and bitter occurred. It is a naive notion that a law can abolish strikes. It can only make them illegal. In some of our States sympathetic strikes for closed shops are illegal, but strikes for these purposes occur just the same.

THE C.I.O.

Today, we are an integral part of the most progressive democratic and fastest growing labor organization in the United States, the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America, one of the big four Internationals of the C.I.O.

This great organization in turn is an integral part of the greatest labor movement on earth, the Congress of Industrial Organization, which has become the hope of the working people of the world. In brief, we want to review the record of this American Labor Movement of the C.I.O.:

- 1—Starting with one million members, C. I. O. has organized three million more previously unorganized workers.
- 2—C.I.O. has changed the biggest industries of the land resses of Unionism.
- 3—C.I.O. has raised the wages in all these industries and added an estimated five billion dollars to the purchasing power of American workers.
- 4—C.I.O. has won paid vacations for millions of industrial workers. It has brought the workers more security and justice through seniority rights, union handling of grievances and freedom from unjust discharge.
- 5—Through increasing purchasing power, preventing wage-cuts, and checking lay-offs, C.I.O. has moderated depression and cushioned its effects on the workers and the Country.
- 6—C.I.O. has doubled the political power of the workers through organization, using this power to enact and protect labor and social legislation, and to furnish the driving force behind the whole liberal and progressive course.

LABOR UNITY

The Congress of Industrial Organizations has steadily and sincerely desired labor unity, a real unity which would enable labor to advance the interests of the workers . . .

Unity in the labor movement can be accomplished only if the Unions in the C.I.O. can continue to organize the unorganized workers in the mass-production and basic industries along industrial lines. And it must be all-inclusive. It must protect and include all the organizations in the C.I.O.

The millions of newly-organized workers are the pride of the C.I.O. Not one must be abandoned to the cavillings of jurisdictional claims of craft unions and the prevalent racketeering within the A.F.L. In short, every affiliated organization of the C.I.O. must be chartered and included in any new united labor body that may develop.

Any program for unity should involve a joint convention of all labor organizations, including those of the A.F.L., Railroad Brotherhoods and the C.I.O., with existing jurisdictional differences to be adjusted in such a convention.

CONCLUSION

The future of our Union, Local No. 301, looks very bright. The monthly dues payments for the month have carried us close to the top in our International. Today, we are not starting from scratch. We have ten thousand members on our records. We have a fine headquarters and excellent material for leadership in the shops. We have hundreds of leaders in the shops that are experienced in the work of operating and expanding this Union and there is nothing to prevent the progress of this organization of

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ORIGINAL TORN