

Current Events In My Section

By Allen E. Townsend

Recently Docket #7642-57, filed by Steward Kovacic under Board Member Mastriani, resulted in a satisfactory settlement. Here the Company insisted on paying a group of piece workers who were on lack of work the P.W.-D.W. rate for the time spent in looking for a job. It was our contention that a piece worker should get no less than his average earnings for the 40-hour lack of work period. At a step two meeting, the Company agreed to pay these men at their average earning rate while looking for a job.

Docket #7790-57, filed by Steward Daley under Board Member DeGraff, resulted in getting the American Pacemaker Lathe rate raised from an I-18 rate to an I-19 rate, and the American Tracer Lathe raised to an I-20 rate.

Docket #7820-57, filed by Steward Marco under Board Member Kaminski, protests the removal of work, always done in the past by this group, to another man out of our bargaining unit. After a long discussion at the top two level, no final decision was reached. The Company agreed to notify the Union in the near future as to what their answer will be. Our course of action will be dependent on that answer.

Docket #7791-57, filed by Steward Wilkinson under Board Member Mastriani, protests the Company bringing back a man from the non-bargaining unit into an opening on the "Kettle Job" in Bldg. 67, when at the same time there are candidates with longer service in the bargaining unit working on lower rated jobs who formerly did this job. At a step two meeting the Company maintained that they had the better qualified candidate for the job. We expect to schedule another meeting in the shop in the near future to see if we can change this ridiculous stand by the Company.

The women's employment situation is still getting worse. As of October 2, 1957, the dates on cleaning women and Office Service stood as follows:

40 hr.	1/7/43
40 hr. (Cafeteria)	2/8/43
30 hr. (Cafeteria)	4/15/43
30 hr.	7/21/43
25 hr.	8/30/43
20 hr.	10/6/43

The above dates represent the shortest service in the plant on Office Service and the Restaurant as of this date. The picture is changing rapidly and by the time we go to press these dates will be obsolete.

Bldg. 81 Test Case Settled

As a result of a joint investigation by representatives of the Union and management, made up of qualified Test people on both sides, a favorable settlement was reached for the Test Operators in Bldg. 81, based on the findings of the investigation.

On September 10th, the SAC management notified the Test Operators that the testing of Western Electric Motors would be reclassified from R-18, \$2.28 an hour, to R-16, \$2.10½ an hour. Following a stoppage, a meeting was held whereby management modified their position and agreed that the major part of Western Electric Motors should be left at the \$2.28 rate with the exception of the commercial part of the motor test.

The results of the joint investigation confirmed the claims of the Test Operators to the effect that the commercial part of the job should be left at the R-18 rate, \$2.28 an hour. The Company agreed to this point which settled the case.

It Pays To Be A Union Member

"No Write" Is Wrong at G.E.

The latest qualification bar that the Company is using against long service women who, through no fault of their own, are being removed from their jobs because of General Electric's "Runaway Plant Profit Plan" is that women on cleaning must now be able to read and write.

During the years that G.E. has been able to make a profit off the labors of these women, the lack of the ability to read and write was no bar—the only qualification was increased production. Now, that increased production is not enough and the Company is leaving for cheaper labor communities, a woman who is forced to work on cleaning jobs has to be able to read and write.

The reason behind this, according to General Electric, is that the girl on day cleaning must leave a note for the night girl telling her where she left off on the cleaning.

This policy is another attempt on the part of local management to further harass women who already have been bumped from job to job through G.E.'s "Runaway Plant Profit Plan".

Top of the Labor News . . .

WASHINGTON (PAI)—The AFL-CIO plans strong support in the next session of Congress for a bill to strengthen the Social Security System. The measure, introduced by Rep. Aime J. Forand, (D.R.I.) would add hospitalization benefits for those retired or eligible for retirement.

WASHINGTON (PAI)—For the 12th straight month the cost of living is up again. The index hit a new high of 121 in August, two-tenths of a point above July and 3.2 points higher than August 1956.

CREOLE, La. (PAI)—Thanks to the efforts of organized labor 22 families have new homes to replace those destroyed by Hurricane Audrey. In a little more than a month building trades union volunteers erected the houses. The American Red Cross furnished the building materials.

WASHINGTON (PAI)—Senator F. Kennedy (D. Mass.) declared "there is a danger of injuring honest union leaders and members with legislation fired in shotgun fashion to get rid of some racketeers, but nevertheless limiting the honest union activity of responsible union leaders."

NEW YORK (PAI)—AFL-CIO Community Service Activities is urging all the 15 million members of the AFL-CIO to give full support to the American Red Cross emergency campaign to meet the threat of an Asian flu epidemic.

BRUSSELS, Belgium (PAI)—November 4, the anniversary of Soviet intervention in Hungary, has been selected as International Solidarity Day by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Feature of the observance will be fund raising to carry on aid to refugees and other humanitarian work of the ICFTU.

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (PAI)—Dr. Wilbur Bothwell, a college professor of economic and political science, speaking at a Kiwanis Club meeting, urged businessmen to cast aside prejudice and emotion against unions. Instead, he told them to seek to understand the purposes of employee organizations.

MUSKEGON, Mich. (PAI)—Senator Pat McNamara (D. Mich.) speaking to a County party meeting, advocated equitable distribution of defense contracts on a nation-wide basis. The idea is to counteract spreading unemployment in certain areas resulting from defense cut-backs.

WASHINGTON (PAI)—Nelson Cruikshank, AFL-CIO Social Security Director, has refuted the charges of private insurance companies that the Social Security System is shaky. He pointed out that the present trust fund balance of \$23 billions is ample for a sound system.

SMALL People

STUBBORN MADE UP HIS MIND YEARS AGO NOT TO JOIN THE UNION... SO THAT'S THAT!

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SMALL People

THE JET FIGURES HE IS SLATED TO GO PLACES IN THE COMPANY... IT'S SMART POLITICS TO BE ANTI-UNION.

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NOTICE Pensioners Meeting

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 1957
2:00 P.M.

UNION AUDITORIUM
121 Erie Blvd.

IUE-CIO LOCAL 301 NEWS

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF LOCAL 301,
REPRESENTING SCHENECTADY
GE WORKERS

Published by the Editorial Committee

President.....Harry Williams
Vice President.....John Shamba
Treasurer.....Gerald O'Brien
Recording Secretary.....Larry Gabo
Ass't Recording Secretary.....Michael Rakvica
Chief Shop Steward.....Vincent Diloranzo
Business Agent.....Leo Jandreau

121 ERIE BLVD. SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

LOCAL 301 NEWS

IUE AFL-CIO

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

October 25, 1957

Union's Reply to Sorenson

Mr. D. L. Sorenson, Manager Union Relations
General Electric Company
Schenectady, New York

October 23, 1957

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

Your letter of October 15, 1957, which deals with the recent stoppage in the Small A.C. Motor and Generator Department, and which affected job values on Test, tries to place the blame of confusion on this Union but proves once again that management has by its own acts thrown bargaining relations into a chaotic condition.

The case was filed by the Test Operators in Bldg. 81 in April of 1957, and was processed through the third step of the grievance procedure in July of 1957. The Test Operators protested a cut in the job value of their work in Bldg. 81, and in the final settlement, after weeks of discussion, the S.A.C. management had to agree to restore at least part of the cut in the job rate.

There is no confusion on the part of the Union representatives that this case was properly processed through the Third Level of the grievance procedure; there is no confusion also as to the justifiability, both legally and morally, of the action taken by the Union in connection with the grievance.

The trouble with the Company's position, as outlined in your letter is that you would like to interpret the existing contract on such a narrow, technical and theoretical basis as to put the Union on a merry-go-round of negotiations with the result that even when a grievance has gone through the third step, the Union would be required to go through the entire circuit again and again while management complacently sits out this impossible situation.

The procedure for the handling of grievances is many years old; it is reduced to writing in a signed contract and is comparatively simple.

At the first step, a grievance must be handled at the shop steward-foreman level; at the second, between a union official and a management representative; at the third step, between a National union official and a Company representative. This was the procedure and out of it there sprung a comparatively smooth practice for many years until management policies took on a "new look"—the look of decentralization.

With decentralization, the Company withdrew the necessary authority to make decisions from its own representatives at every step of the grievance procedure. It made of collective bargaining a sham and a mockery; it ensured the likelihood of not adjusting grievances except with unnecessary delays and the natural consequences of such delays. In short, the withdrawal of authority was made an effective threat to peaceful labor relations and now borders, if it is not actually, a violation of our Federal laws which require an employer to bargain in good faith.

Take for example the action of the Company in connection with the first step of handling grievances. The contract has not been changed and is still in force but the foreman's authority to make decisions has been abolished. Or take the second step, on management level. Previously, the Works Manager had the authority

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G. E. Representatives Flanked by Lawyers at Unemployment Hearings

At hearings which commenced in Syracuse on Monday, October 14, 1957 and continued in Schenectady on Monday, October 21, 1957 G. E. tried to defeat the claims for unemployment insurance benefits of G. E. workers affected by shut-downs by sending in four lawyers (including specially hired counsel from New York) and about twice as many labor relations representatives and top-brass officials.

These hearings arose out of the Company's objections to the rulings of the Industrial Commissioner of the State of New York. These rulings were to the effect that workers forced out of work by so-called vacation shut-down, scheduled by the employer despite the union's protest, were entitled to vacation benefits. The Company took the position that even workers who, at the time of the shut-down, did not earn or receive any vacation pay should not receive unemployment benefits if they should have earned such vacation pay at any time after the period of unemployment. From the Company's point of view a worker could starve during a two-week shut-down without pay, and live on future expectations.

An interesting side-light, but very important in the case, was the Company's position with respect to the contract. Ever since the first union contract with the Company, almost twenty years ago, the contract has provided that vacations should run simultaneously with a shut-down in instances where "The Works" are shut-down. Everyone knows, that in Schenectady, the entire Works have never been shut-down by G.E. and that only some departments have staggered their shut-downs during July and August. This written provision, signed by the Company year after year was rejected by G. E. at the unemployment hearings. The Company took the ridiculous position that everyone knows that in Schenectady there are many "Works" and not just a single large enterprise known as the Schenectady Works.

Mr. Jandreau, Business Agent of Local 301 testified in behalf of the Union. He contradicted the testimony of Mr. A. C. Stevens, Manager of Relation and Utilities Department. He pointed out that reference to the "Schenectady Works" within the meaning of the contract meant the entire Schenectady installation and not just parts of it. He also made it clear, that the Union for years had protested by letter and grievances.

As the lawyers have yet to file briefs it is not expected that a final decision will be reached before some time in December.

NOTICE Shop Stewards Meeting

Monday, Nov. 4, 1957
2nd Shift—1:00 p.m.
1st and 3rd Shifts—7:30 p.m.
Union Auditorium
121 Erie Blvd.

NOTICE Executive Board Meeting

Monday, Oct. 28, 1957
7:30 P.M.
UNION HEADQUARTERS
121 Erie Blvd.

G.E. Violates Union Supplemental Agreement

Mr. D. L. Sorenson, Manager
Union Relations
General Electric Company
Schenectady, New York

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

We have notified the local management on many occasions that the Union has been dissatisfied with the application of our Local Supplemental Agreement affecting decreasing of forces and transfers due to lack of work.

Refusals on the part of management representatives to abide by our agreement have been numerous and in many of these instances of violation, G. E. management representatives were reluctant to fully recognize our agreement and its application even after the Union representatives presented the facts in the case.

Our Bargaining Unit has been in a turmoil for nearly two years as the result of members of our Union being transferred from one job to another due to lack of work which was initially caused by the movement of departments and jobs from Schenectady to the South and elsewhere. There have been approximately 5,000 employees affected by transfers between departments in the last 22 months, and that record does not include transfers within a department. The results of these transfers mean reduction in earnings and change of shift for a large percentage of the employees affected.

The Union set up a special Placement Committee to handle complaints on improper job offers at a considerable expense to the Union. Our committee has presented cases to management for disposition. Lately we have been having difficulties getting answers on these cases even when these types of grievances have a time limitation of one week before the employee involved must lose time.

The lack of authority on the part of a single management representative to force the 17 department managers to accept the application of our contract correctly is sorely missing—this causes delays, injustices and expensive administrative cost.

Unilateral decisions are made by management representatives in the application of our agreement, which are definite violations, without any consultation with the Union.

The following types of violation have resulted, with cases filed to confirm our charges:

1. Refusal to release employee from a department to apply his service on more comparable work which is employing shorter service employees.
2. Refusal to grant more than incidental training to employees who have more than six months more service than the employee being displaced. (Inter-dept. transfers)
3. Refusal to allow longer service employees to replace shorter service employees on low rated jobs because of sex.
4. Unilaterally deciding that employees with 1951 service will only be considered on jobs one step higher than common labor or below when employees with shorter service are being maintained on higher rated jobs.
5. Refusal to give information on service dates affecting a pending grievance on layoff.
6. Unnecessary delay in receiving answers on complaints referred to management when employee is subject to lose time after 5 days.

We have processed grievances protesting these violations through the N. Y. Level of the grievance procedure; however, the Company has not to this day rectified the situation. We have exhausted our patience on this matter and while we are not in a position to order disciplinary action to management representatives, some action by the Union, however, is justifiable under the circumstances.

We are willing to discuss this matter further if you think there is any possible way to straighten it out.

Sincerely yours,

LEO JANDREAU

Business Agent
Local 301, IUE-AFL-CIO

LJ/ejb

October 21, 1957

Foundry Conference Held At Elmira

A Foundry Conference was held in Elmira, N. Y., last Saturday. Represented at the meeting were delegates from Schenectady, Lynn and Elmira Foundries.

A discussion on rates showed that Elmira rates were approximately 35c an hour lower than Lynn and Schenectady. Elmira was formerly represented by the U. E., and a few months ago they voted to join the I. U. E.

The conference also had discussion on competition, with farmouts of work to large steel and iron companies. The Schenectady delegates reported that the Iron Foundry in Schenectady may eventually close operations and convert to steel because of the large iron companies, such as Republic, taking their work. The rates in Republic Steel are as high as G. E. rates, but the wage question is not the deciding factor.

The Conference planned to hold another conference in the near future, with additional foundries to be invited.

Activities Committee Plan Christmas Party

The Activities Committee of Local 301 has set the dates for the children's Christmas Party. One party will be held on Saturday, December 21st, and the other on Sunday, December 22nd, 1957.

The committee decided to utilize two days this year for the Christmas Party based on last year's experience, whereby long lines of parents with children were obliged to line up outside the building. The hours scheduled by the committee to distribute gifts and sweets will be from 11:00 a. m. to 4:00 p. m., on each of the two days listed above.

The party will be conducted in the same manner as last year, whereby the children will enter the Auditorium, select a gift, receive some candy from Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and leave by a door at the opposite end of the hall.

Union members must contact their Shop Steward, who has been supplied with forms to be filled in by the member, in order to obtain admission tickets to the Christmas Party. For any information or questions regarding the party, contact Roy Schaffer, Chairman of the Activities Committee.

League of Women Voters Speak to Membership

Two representatives of the League of Women Voters spoke at the Membership Meeting last Monday on the six amendments that the State Legislature has placed before the voters at the polls in the November election.

League representatives were Miss Diamond and Mrs. Dhanak, who outlined briefly the amendments and what they were about. They also offered a publication that gives the pros and cons on all the amendments coming before the voters.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse candidates.

On the top line of the voting machine will be the question of whether there will be a New York State Constitutional Convention. If the vote is "Yes", 139 delegates will be elected in November, 1958, for the convention scheduled in April, 1959. If the vote is "No", the question will be on the ballot again, by law in 20 years, unless the Legislature submits it to the people before the 20-year period is exhausted.

The six other amendments submitted to the voters are briefly as follows:

AMENDMENT No. 1—(Education Program)

A "Yes" vote would permit the State Legislature to authorize bond issues to supplement annual state revenues available for the improvement and expansion program of the State University.

A "No" vote would limit this program to projects that could be financed by annually appropriated funds of the state.

AMENDMENT No. 2—(Housing Corporations)

A "Yes" vote will permit limited-profit housing corporations borrowing money from the state for the purpose of middle-income housing, to repay the loans by uniform annual payments covering both principal and interest. (These corporations are regulated by state law as to rents, profits, dividends and disposition of their property.)

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Compensation Benefits Possible Without Accidental Injury

It is very common for workers to believe that only when they have had an accident while at work can they receive medical treatment paid for by an employer or reimbursement for lost wages. As a matter of fact, however, certain injuries have been recognized to result from the nature of the work performed and in such cases compensation must be paid even in the absence of an accident.

This is important for a worker to know. Often a worker finds himself going to a doctor with an illness or disease which he suspects came from his work. His doctor may not know what work the man is doing and he therefore cannot relate the condition to the job. Since claims must be filed within a limited time, only too often does a worker lose his rights to benefits altogether thus releasing the employer from all responsibility.

As a word of caution it must be said here that, absent an accident, not every illness or disease, stems from an occupation. Occasionally, for example, a person who contracts tuberculosis gets the impression that he got this disease from his working conditions. The courts have held, however, that compensation can be obtained by a person who has tuberculosis only if the disease arose "out of the course of employment" or in other words from a hazard which is part of the job and which can give a person tuberculosis. Today, for the most part, the only workers who can get compensation for disability from tuberculosis are employees who come into contact with other tubercular patients, as for example nurses in a tubercular hospital.

Other occupational diseases are, of course, easier to relate to an occupation and are easier to establish. A person who does heavy lifting as part of his job may, for example, sustain a hernia. An accident is not necessary to be proved in such a case. Or take as an example the worker whose skin comes in contact with irritants like thinners and lubricants. He may develop a skin condition which is then compensable. The same may be true with the worker whose lungs or bronchial tubes may be affected by dust or fumes; or the worker who puts continual pressure on a part of the body in his work and gets bursitis; or poisoning from gases; or many other occupational diseases.

The important thing to remember is that while an illness may not have resulted from your work, if in doubt discuss it with your doctor. If the doctor feels that the disease did, in fact, come from the work, ask him to file a report and then file a claim for compensation.

A Product of Progress

In the Large Motor and Generator Department a good example of General Electric's progress as being "Their Most Important Product" flagrantly violates all the common rules of justice and righteousness that are in the book.

The President of General Electric says automation will bring about higher standards, but it did not work out that way in the case of two oldtimers in Bldg. 16. A new machine was developed in General Electric's Manufacturing Laboratory — this department specializes in the development of new machines and manufacturing techniques. The machine is called a "Commutator Segment Sawing Machine". Two long service workers with approximately 17 years of service each were employed on this job. Their earnings were approximately \$2.40 an hour (P.W.). After the machine was installed, the men were offered \$1.95 an hour day work, a pay cut of \$18.00 a week.

The alternative was to accept a transfer to some other job. The long service employees decided that they could not afford a cut in pay and choose to be transferred. The management of LM&G then hired two new operators for the machine with 6 years of service each and started them at \$1.89 an hour to progress to the new job rate of \$1.95.

As we go to press, the only suitable job for one of the oldtimers was in Bldg. 12 at \$1.95 an hour (D.W.). The other was in the process of being placed. A grievance has been filed by the Union and is pending a meeting at the third step of the grievance procedure.

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