

Rotterdam's Tragic Story

Residents of Rotterdam are thinking of changing the name of their town to Rottendam—but it's no joke. Home-owners in this community are faced with the loss in value of hundreds of thousands of dollars of property.

Much worse, however, is the serious threat to the health and well-being of hundreds of families.

Visit Rotterdam these days and you'll find a high state of indignation existing among its residents—whether you visit a home in the Carman section, Fort Hunter, Lillian Estates, Fred's Community P.O.t, Stoodley Gardens, Colonial Sections or Coldbrook. Again and again you'll hear the disgusted cry:

"We're fed up. Something's got to be done."

The problem is water, too much water, water that should be draining away, but instead is backing up into hundreds of homes. Many families as a result have no fires, others have moved their furnaces upstairs from their flooded basements. In some cases, foundations of houses have cracked. There have been cases of a wall collapsing.

Dampness pervades homes, with furniture in many mildewing and ruined. The dampness makes it impossible to close many doors. Accompanying this is a constant bad odor.

Worst of all, residents will tell you, the septic tanks are backing up, increasing the health hazard. Nearly everyone is boiling their drinking water. Bad feelings are engendered in the community by the fact that people are forced to pump the water into streets.

The houses affected are all fairly new, having been built in the past five years.

The trouble dates back to a little over a year ago. That's when a well-known contractor, who has a reputation of "how to build houses cheap," bulldozed a natural stream in the Coldbrook section. Since that time, residents will tell you the water has been backing up into their cellars. The bulldozing blocked up the town's natural drainage, they insist.

A civic group was formed last November, which insisted that the town supervisor declare a community emergency. No emergency was declared, but engineers were called in. Their conclusions: Nature will take care of the problem when the water table drops.

A message was sent to Gov. Thomas E. Dewey, N. Y. State engineers were sent in. They proposed an open drainage ditch be

dug and blamed the problem on a record rainfall last year.

But you can find hundreds of witnesses that will testify they had water in their basements before the rains came. An open drainage ditch has been started, but can't be finished unless it's extended to Calonie Township, five miles away. Calonie hasn't agreed and Rotterdam residents aren't convinced it'll work if it is ever finished.

A Stormy Meeting

At the last Town Meeting in the local fire house, the town supervisor outlined a plan for laying a drinking water pipe that would have crushed stone underneath, which, he said, would relieve pressure and allow seepage. Everyone there rejected this as another run-around and the meeting broke up on a stormy note.

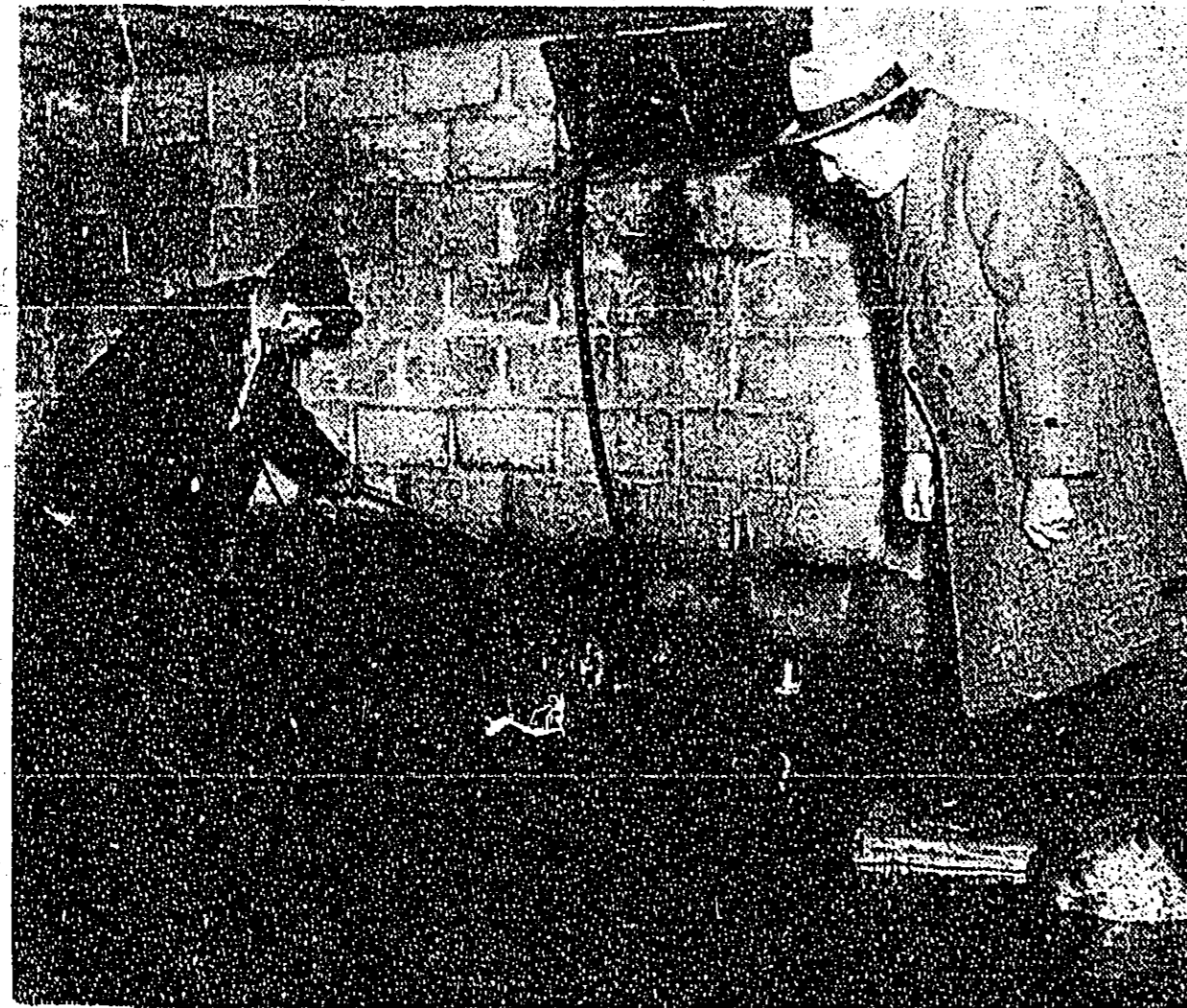
They feel the town government should never have permitted the contractor to bulldoze in Coldbrook and that the situation won't improve until it is reopened and there is again a natural drainage, with piping.

A group of UE members last week came to Local 301 asking for aid and assistance. It has been promised. "301" has retained the services of its own attorney, Leon Novak, to represent these home-owners. The Union will assist Rotterdam residents in an investigation to determine a solution for the grave problem, and, if the situation warrants it, will file a suit for damages against those responsible for the situation, whether individuals, corporations or the township.

Constant Water Level

Three of UE's members told "301" they're far from having the worst situation, but their plight gives an indication of the general problem. All work in Bldg. 273 at the Schenectady Works.

John DiGiorgio says he has to fire his furnace with his boots on even though he purchased two pumps at a cost of \$45 each. Lewis Miller told us he's "a little more fortunate." He has "only" two to three inches of water, but has had to buy two pumps to keep it at that level. Elwin A. Rose has also bought two pumps. Going full-time, they keep the water level in his basement to nine inches.



BASEMENT IN ROTTERDAM. The basement of UE member Theodore Godlewski, located at Campbell and Highbridge Roads in the Carman section of Rotterdam, is seen above at what is the "normal" level with a pump going day and night. Local 301 Pres. James Cognetta (right), who personally investigated the situation for the Union, has pointed out to him what the level would be without the pump going. This is "normal" for hundreds of homes in Rotterdam.

Work Stoppages in 46 Halt Rate Chiseling

Two work stoppages in Bldg. 46, one on Jan. 10 and the other on Jan. 15, protested management's continued rate cutting and chiseling in two departments.

Tempers reached a boiling point in December in aeronautics and ordnance when the eighth case since last March of payment of Piece Work, Day Wage for full time spent on a job, which denied workers their Incentive Earning Rate occurred. GE had agreed to adjust this case by anticipating all jobs that are not standard, with the help of a wage rate man.

However, when Mike Bazilik, who was the first of the eight cases last March, was again the victim of such a practice, resentment mounted into a work stoppage on Jan. 10.

Bazilik was setting up a job with a time study man, who complained he wasn't going fast enough. Bazilik stated he was going at a normal speed, as required in time studies, and the time study man angrily halted his time study and walked off, a clear violation of management's agreement.

The stoppage resulted in the time study resuming on the basis

there would be no speed-up in setting up the operation.

Lathe-man in 46 shut down work on Jan. 15, when management announced it was reducing the price for turning out spur gear blanks from \$1.85 a piece to \$1 a piece. Normal output set in August for 7½ hours was 12 gears.

The blow-off was aggravated by the fact that management had been promising Price Rate tables for two years, with the last promise that they'd be forthcoming in two months made on Nov. 1. Also, foremen had taken away all special tools and turned them into the tool crib, short orders were consistently not paid for the full time spent on them, delays of four and five days were common for make-ups, late pays on Friday didn't permit time to check the payroll for adjustments, lack of proper packages and fixtures hampered work all which was capped by the foreman stating:

"You shouldn't expect to make your rate every week."

The lathe-men agreed to resume work when management agreed to take up every complaint and settle it to the satisfaction of the men.

ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

THE VOICE OF THE UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO & MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA — LOCAL 301, UE

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Friday, February 1, 1951

Take It From Here . . .

Gary, Ind. The 35,000 steel workers in this area at recent meetings demanded that Charles E. Wilson quit as Defense Mobilizer "unless he quits speaking for the companies." Source of their immediate ire is Wilson's recent statement in Chicago that a wage increase for steel workers would wreck the government's economic program.

* * *

Cleveland, O.—Hundreds of UE Local 707 members, who work in the GE Euclid plant, have signed postcards demanding that the Wage Stabilization Board quit stalling on the 3.58 percent increase.

* * *

Wilmington, Del.—Hourly raises at the Pyrites Co. have been boosted 17 cents in 15 months by UE Local 520P. Latest general increase was five cents, with additional raises of four to 15 cents through job reclassification.

* * *

Baltimore, Md.—An 18 day tie-up of the city's transportation resulted in victory for 3,200 Baltimore Transit Co. workers. Their new contract calls for a nine cent increase, with an additional six-cent increase in each of the following two years. The strike was set off when the company offered only a four cent raise.

* * *

Aliquippa, Pa.—The 13,000 workers at the Jones & Laughlin steel mill shut down work when the company tried to speed up work in the seamless mill. Work was resumed on the basis that work would be held to the "normal" rate.

* * *

Chicago—CIO Packinghouse Union members in Armour plants in Chicago, South St. Paul and Omaha stopped work to protest a company offer of six cents an hour as inadequate. The offer, which was accepted by the AFL and supported by the wage freeze board, was protested by over 8,000 workers.

* * *

Youngstown, Ohio—Steel workers in the Republic plants stopped work to protest a company incentive plan. They returned to work after the company was given a seven day ultimatum to bring in a plan acceptable to the workers.



PUTTING THE BOOKS IN ORDER. Four times a year, UE Local 301's finances are examined by the New York City auditing firm of Bernard Ades, but every January they're thoroughly scrutinized by the duespayers. Three auditors are elected at the December membership meeting. They're seen above, with Local 301's trustees, checking the books last week. They'll report to the February membership meeting. Seen above: (l. to r.) John Steslow, 273; Trustee Edward Luberda, 17; Thomas McGrath, 52; Trustee Joseph Whitbeck, 69; William Quinlan, 52 and Trustee William Garrison.

Executive Board Election Set For February 7

The election of a new '301' Executive Board for 1952 will take place on Thursday, February 7, it was announced this week by John Saccocio, chairman and Michael Rakvica, secretary, of the Election Committee.

Their announcement came after the present Board recommended the basis for representation on the new Board. The annual election had been held up by action of the January membership meeting, which voted another month's time to study proposed changes.

The Board's recommendation will be presented for final action and approval at the membership meeting to be held Monday, February 4.

Local 301 Board members are elected by the stewards. The Election Committee will notify all stewards of their voting schedule at Union Headquarters. Two hours lost time will be granted each steward to permit time for voting.

Only those elected during the steward elections since Dec. 19, 1951 are eligible to vote. No proxies or alternates are permitted to vote. Stewards must be present. Candidates for Board membership must be shop stewards with a total experience of six months.

Basis of representation for the Board, which the membership will vote on Feb. 4, is one member each for the following buildings or groups of buildings:

Third shift Bldg. 273; first shift 273 (section one, Broadway to south of building from east to

west); section two 273 (west side of service bay to North Ave. to B'way); section three 273 (east

Continued on page 2

Living Costs Hit New Top, 81.9% Over Pre-War

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON, Jan. 25.—Rising food prices sent the government's living cost index to a new high today.

LIVING COST INDEX RISES TO NEW PEAK

ONE-SIDED FREEZE. The headlines above tell what's happening to prices—while wages are frozen. The government is supposed to hold the line on prices. Instead, it has set floors under prices, NOT ceilings, which encourages prices to keep rising. Meanwhile, the Wage Board sits on 16,919 (at last count) cases involving millions of workers, including GE. What's needed is to tell your congressmen and senators you want real price controls—and an end to the phony wage freeze.

UE Launches Drive to Bust Wage Stall

The Wage Stabilization Board in Washington, which has been sitting and doing nothing about the GE 3.58 percent wage increase, is in for a lot more direct pressure from workers in the shop, such as they got from a bus-load of UE Local 301 members two weeks ago.

Spearheading this activity will be the National UE, which announced last week that it is launching a simultaneous campaign in all plants of the GE, Westinghouse and Sylvania chains—where the WSB is stalling wage approvals affecting 325,000 workers.

Pulling no punches as to why there is the long delay, UE charged:

"One of the principal reasons for delay is the failure of the companies to lift a finger to bring about speedy approval.

"The failure of the companies to show the slightest interest in securing immediate approval indicates behind-the-scenes connivance on their part with members of the Board. In event such approval is voted, they would want it done only on condition that the agreements must contain provisions giving management the right to unrestrained speed-up in exchange for a few pennies hand-out to be based on increased productivity."

The urgency of rank and file pressure on the WSB was also underscored in UE's statement that prompt approval must be won "not only because our people are in immediate need of these increases, which are in themselves inadequate, but the failure to secure immediate approval will directly affect the coming wage negotiations with these companies."

The UE national campaign will be conducted in all plants, regardless of what union holds bargaining rights, at every level of supervision from the foreman up.

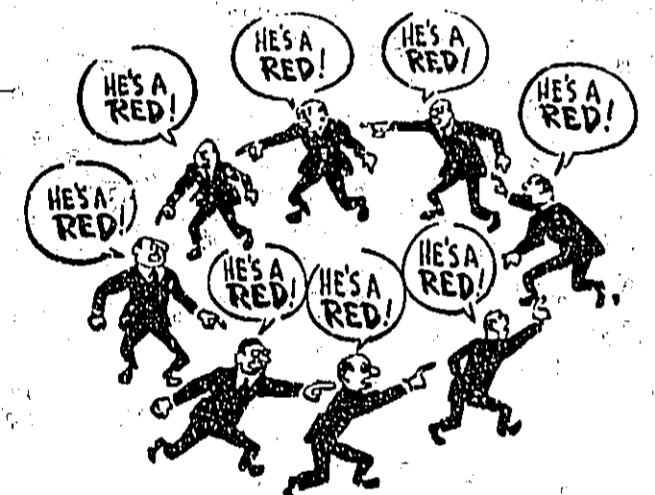
Department, building and plant meetings are urged to demand the companies demonstrate their good faith by getting the WSB to approve the increase. Also called for are delegations to foremen, superintendents and managers.

Sen. Humphrey Is A New Face With Old Tricks

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (Dem., Minn.), who is out to bust UE, is quickly proving to be merely a new face with old tricks.

All the old red charges that have been brought into Schenectady by such union-busters as the un-American Committee, the Kersten Committee, Jim Carey's Committees for Democratic Action and IUE-CIO, from 1947 to 1951, are all being revived by Humphrey.

He's asked Gordon Dean, head of the Atomic Energy Commission, which once attacked UE, to help him. Dean said he had no new suggestions for "specific approach to legislation." Though CIO turned over 133 pages of past red-baiting material for the Senator to use, when Humphrey asked Phil Murray for evidence showing the need for a new bill to attack UE,



the CIO head was compelled to admit: "We do not believe any such showing has been made."

Humphrey, like past union-busters that have been rejected by UE members, is also using the old stunt of "consulting" managements.

But if Humphrey has no new gimmicks, this tarnished "liberal" certainly has an inflated ego that should put all members on guard against his attacks. He boasts he "knows more" about how to hamper unions than those who wrote the Taft-Hartley act.

All of which is enough to know for UE members to reject this New Face with Old Tricks, if he shows up in town, even speedier than they've dispatched past union-busters and wreckers.

ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO & MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA
Schenectady GE Local 301 UE

Published by the Editorial Com.
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Treasurer—Henry Kaminski
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Recording Secretary—John P. Green
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Chief Shop Steward—James Cognotti
Business Agent—Leo Jandroau
301 LIBERTY ST. SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

DON'T BE HALF-SURE. If you're out sick, you can save a lot of trouble for yourself by filling out in time the above encircled section of the Statement of Claim in plenty of time. Many have complained that when they're out longer than the doctor originally estimated, their payments stop and don't start again for weeks. If you're going to be out for a longer period, make sure that 6d and 6e (above) are filled out three or four days in advance by your doctor. It's on the reverse side of the Statement of Claim under the heading Doctor's Statement. If there is any difficulty getting the form filled out—call the Union at once.

Grievance Filing Urged On Insurance Complaints

The present insurance plan that UE has in its contract with GE will be as effective as the members and stewards make it. The more effective that members make the plan the better chance there will be to achieve amendments in contract negotiations next September that will improve the plan.

This conclusion was reached by Union officers this last week after an investigation of widespread complaints over the working of the plan.

First and foremost, '301' officers emphasized, every complaint should be filed as a regular grievance, the same as any other grievance under the contract. Members should contact their steward immediately if they have any difficulty. Stewards should file a docket at once on the problem.

Many other contract provisions in the past, the officers said, were only paper provisions until such

time as members through the stewards and grievance machinery "dotted the i's and crossed the t's" and made the company observe them.

A second extremely important reason for filing grievances, it was said, is that in addition to getting grievances adjusted, it will build up a record that will serve as a back-log for arguments in September to prove the necessity for amendments to improve the present insurance and medical plan.

Since this is the first contract in which UE has had such a plan, such a record and daily work to enforce it, will go a long way toward working out all the kinks in the plan.

UE '301' ON THE JOB

Thousands of grievances are handled by UE Local 301 each year at all levels from the steward up to final appeal in New York City. To keep members posted, we shall each week in this column list some of the grievances that have not been settled at the steward-foreman level and have been referred to the executive board-management level.

Bldg. 28: Mary Eagan, formerly an inspector, class J, accepted transfer to class K job, with understanding she'd get J again when possible. Several others, with less service, have since got J. Request that she be upgraded to J.

The Union helped I. Kubina win upgrading from inspector E to C in July, 1951. He got a step increase in Nov., 1951. It should have been effective in July and an adjustment of pay to that time is asked.

Bldg. 29: A group of pieceworkers in Mica can't make more than A.E.R. of job, being paid average of 3 to 4 days a week at Piece Work, Day Work. Foreman claims he can't get 18" machine time studied. Request one-and-a-half

hour pay for time lost by group on scrap mica, a time study on 18" machine so proper price can be set, and object to foreman's attitude on written dockets. Instead of an answer in 24 hours, the foreman took six days on a recent docket.

Bldg. 60: Because he does the same work as others and is giving normal performance, the same job rate is requested on crane work for Lewis J. Di Caterino.

A contract violation of Article VI, Section 5 (d.) is charged on timing rate of geometric threading machine. Always done before by men, the rate was .78/C. When assigned to women it was cut to .60/C. Set-up on job has always been done by set-up men. Since women are doing same duties as men, restoration of .78/C rate is demanded.

Bldg. 273: Glenn Rose, performing same work as Welder-Hand-Special, requests proper classification and rate of 1.865.

Bldg. 285: A group in control charges that the Clean Terminal

Executive Board Poll Set for February 7

Continued from page 1

side of service bay from B'way to front of building); Bldgs. 67, 69, 71, 73, 73A, 75, 77, 79, 234, Bldgs. 52, 64, 66; Bldg. 60; Bldgs. 11 Test, 13, 13F, 61, 63, 258; 259, 265 (and 5-37 electricians); and Bldgs. 11, 18.

Also, Bldgs. 15, 17, 19; Bldg. 40; Bldgs. 43, 49, 61TG, 65; Bldgs. 59, 269; Bldgs. 80, 84, 227; Bldgs. 68, 72, 76, 238, 241; Bldg. 85; Bldgs. 12, 14, 16, 29, 16 Annex; Bldgs. 97, 109, 93 rear; Bldgs. 46, 48, 50; Bldgs. 60, 273, 107 (building trades except electricians and tinsmiths); Bldgs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 37; Bldgs. 22, 23, 24; Bldgs. 10C, 25, 26, 28; Bldg. 285; Bldgs. 81, 89; Bldgs. 57, 87, 91, 95, A. B. C. D., 99A. B., 101, 105, 93 front; Campbell Ave. & Race Track; Bldgs. 53, 49 fire patrol; and Knolls, Malta, Flight Test, Alplaus.

Also to be elected is one woman-at-large, one second shift member-at-large and two members for second shift in Bldg. 273.

"Every Member Bring A Member"
UE LOCAL 301
JOINT MEETING
Members & Stewards
2nd SHIFT
Monday, Feb. 4, 1952
1:30 P.M. (before work)
1st and 3rd SHIFTS
Monday, Feb. 4, 1952
7:30 P.M.
Local 301 Hall
Erie Blvd. & Liberty St.

and Tap job was reduced from timing rate of 74 cents to 60 when job was moved a short distance, with no change in method. Restoration of 74 cent rate is demanded.

Malta: Thomas J. Stetkar's job rate of 1.81 is too low and does not compare with similar work in plant. He maintains and repairs 10 Allison aircraft engines, several Diesel caterpillars and cranes, along with garage work. Union is seeking rate between that for Aircraft Mechanics and Maintenance Diesel Engines in Transportation.

Correction: We mentioned E. Bracken last week as having a holiday grievance in Cap. Ave. Plant. Actually, it was Harry O. Willrich who filed the grievance. E. Bracken is the foreman, who was accused by Willrich with failure to take steps required under the contract to process his grievance. We're sorry.

Solution Sought For Rotterdam Water Problems

There's been a lot of action around Rotterdam in the past week since the NEWS last week spotlighted the grave problem the residents are facing from flooded conditions in hundreds of homes.

The local Gazette also launched a series of articles on the problem, and Fred Perry, a UE member, who is chairman of a community homeowners association, journeyed to Albany to ask state action.

Local 301's attorney, Leon Novak, and Marshall White, office manager, met with a civic group in Stoodley Gardens on Jan. 23, to lend the Union's assistance and help.

Another group in Colonie, also threatened by the problem, has asked the Union's attorney to assist them.

The general consensus of the residents UE officials have talked to is that the cause of the situation is the bulldozing of a natural stream in Coldbrook by a building contractor.

At the request of resident groups, Novak has sent letters to the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration, urging these agencies to intercede and investigate since not only the homeowners' but U. S. investments are threatened.

Meanwhile, two crews of engineers have been over the area.

A state spokesman emphasized, however, that he considered the responsibility a local one and not a state one.

The General Electric Engineers Assn. stuck its oar in with the opinion that record rainfalls might have caused it—or, it might be caused by a pre-glacial channel of the Mohawk river that lies under the Carman section.

Paging Winnie!

Then there's the story, and a true one, about the UE member living in Rotterdam who went to Gov. Dewey's office in Albany to ask for state action on the flood situation in his town. The politicians there tried to brush him off. But this member wasn't to be put off so easily.

He threatened to go to Washington, D. C. about the problem. In fact, he said, if it was necessary he'd take the case to Winston Churchill.

P.S. He then got the promise of some action.



THE LAKE NOBODY WANTED. What is now a lake on Curry Road, at the boundary line of Rotterdam, Colonie and Guelderland, was a fertile field only six months ago, with potatoes, cranberry beans, corn, spinach and asparagus dotting it. It's just another instance of the grave problem the Rotterdam water situation has become. While Rotterdam has been the worst hit, some residents of Guelderland and Colonie are also afflicted with water-logged basements. Residents of the three communities are discussing coordinated action to get relief. UE Local 301 has pledged its full assistance in all such efforts.



Demand 24 Hour Reply On All Grievances

The time has come for stewards to call a halt in granting requests by foremen for "time" to study grievances. It has become increasingly obvious in the past four or five months that GE supervision is callously using this method to stall grievances and to build cases against them.

That was the estimate and advice given out last week by William Templeton, UE '301' assistant business agent.

Templeton cited cases where foremen have asked for as much as four weeks to check a price or an upgrading, only to finally give an unsatisfactory answer.

"This only hurts getting the grievance settled," said Templeton, "and creates dissatisfaction, with some workers tending to unduly criticize the Union."

He suggested that the following procedure be strictly adhered to halt this practice of management:

- Give a foreman only 24 hours to reply to an oral contract.
- If a foreman asks for more time, give him a written docket immediately, with a written request for a reply in 24 hours.
- If the foreman hasn't replied by the next day, get hold of the UE Local 301 office immediately.

"The office is open anytime," he said. "It's as near as the nearest phone."

While Templeton addressed his advice mainly to new stewards, he noted that veteran stewards should also take heed, since the company, through its foremen, is entitled to no leniency until such time as a genuine desire is evinced to settle grievances on the basis of merit.

A good guide, said Templeton, would be: "One oral contact is enough. From then on, get it on the record."

Local Leaders Spur '301' Fighting Fund

First ones to lay it on the line in the drive to build a UE Local 301 Fighting Fund are the leaders of the Union.

At the '301' Executive Board meeting, Monday, Jan. 28, all the officers and Board members pledged they'd have their \$5 paid in full by the time of the membership meeting, Feb. 4.

Board members stressed the urgent need of such a fund, with the Union scheduled to open negotiations for wages on March 5, with a contract renewal to be argued in September and the threat of union-busting attacks by Senator H. H. Humphrey, of Minnesota.

February 11 Set As '301' Prudential Strikers Day

The Union has proclaimed Monday, February 11, as Prudential Day in the Schenectady Works. A plant-wide collection will be conducted to aid striking agents.

This action was voted by the '301' Executive Board on January 28, after hearing a spokesman for the AFL International Union of Insurance Agents tell of the courageous eight-week strike of Pru agents—many of whom are now facing hardships.

Board members demonstrated immediate support by contributing \$1 each and presenting it to the AFL insurance union spokesman.