Inaction Of UWUA

Despite the repeated protests of both IBEW and UWUA members it was evident this week UWUA officials were neglecting their stewardship of the contract for Bay Division PG&E employees.

Grievances involving some of the most basic rights of union members were being ignored by the UWUA officials. The complaints were coming from the UWUA's claimed bastion in Oakland as well as elsewhere in the four divisions.

Because of the quickie contract executed by the UWUA while the petition for an election was pending, the IBEW has been powerless to obtain settlement of many of these grievances despite the fact that committees have been set up for the purpose. The company claims its contract with the UWUA makes it necessary for them to deal with the UWUA on these matters.

POSITION

The IBEW has stated repeatedly that it is willing to turn all grievances of its members over to the UWUA for settling. The IBEW position, as stated recently by C. P. "Chuck" Hughes was that IBEW does not care who gets credit for settling of grievances just so they are settled.

With the UWUA refusing to press for the settlement of the grievances of its own members and refusing to recognize IBEW members' grievances, their appeared to be little chance this week of getting those reported by the unit grievance committees settled unless the spotlight of publicity moved the UWUA to action.

Certainly IBEW members were not going to stand idly by and see the UWUA continue to allow job conditions won over a period of many years to be eliminated by default through new precedent established by a group of irresponsible UWUA officials.

PRINCIPLES

Ignoring the basic union principles written into the present contract (Continued on Page 2)

CONVENTION TIME

State AFL Unions

Two-Day Meet of

Electrical Assn.

The California State Federation of Labor, dominant state labor body, was preparing to convene in Los Angeles. The IBEW is a part of the State Federation which is made up of hundreds of AFL local unions in California.

The convention should spotlight for PG&E employees another important reason for IBEW progress in this State. The IBEW affiliates insist that the settlement of the grievances of its members over to the UWUA is part of activity of all AFL groups.

The California Federation is one of the largest and most progressive state labor organizations in the nation. At the recent session of the State Legislature, which was noted for its anti-labor bias, the Federation was instrumental in getting bills passed which will bring a total of more than $25,000,000 in annual benefits to California working men and women.

J. Haggerty, Secretary of the State Federation of Labor, had this to say in advance of the convention:

"Definite plans must be made for the 1950 congressional and state elections as well as those intervening special elections.

"Uncertainty of present economic trends and the increased unemployment throughout the state and nation must be faced and corrective measures must be developed and presented to a successful conclusion.

"Labor aims to be considered included: Repeal of Taft-Hartley; increase in federal minimum wage; organization of work; broader social security program; improved unemployment benefits; a national prepaid medical plan; improved worker's compensation; housing; rent control, etc."

Registration of delegates gets under way Sunday, August 28, with the opening session to be held Monday. Nearly 3,000 delegates are expected.

Do Not Post:

A TIMELY STUDY OF CONFUSION

During the first two days of the convention of the California Federation of Labor, the State Electrical Workers' Association will also be meeting in Los Angeles. The Federation convenes August 26th.

Local 1324 and Local 1245 IBEW are both affiliates of the association which is devoted to advancing the welfare of the IBEW electrical worker in California.

The association has committees set up which have been doing some very effective work.

There is a legislative committee which works for the passage of measures the association deems necessary. There is a broadcast committee charged with the responsibility for advising the public about such measures.

There is a committee for apprentice training, highway lighting and safety rules.

H. B. Mayhew, a member of Local 1224 IBEW Martinez unit, is chairman of the safety rules committee. Local 1324's executive board was requested by IBEW 9th District Vice President Oscar Harbuck to delegate Mayhew to the August 26th meeting after James Lance, association secretary, had personally requested that he be present to carry on projects begun at the last CSEWA meeting.

IBEW Representatives Merritt Snyder and Larry Drew will also attend as delegates of Local 1324.

Units to Meet on Economic Program

Committees of all Units will meet August 29th, 8 p.m., at Potter Hall, 1918 Grove Street, Oakland, Calif., for final consideration of Local No. 1324's Economic Program.
Is Worker Over 45 Too Old for Job?

Older workers are again being hit the hardest by unemployment, the Federal Security agency reported this week. It declared that prewar productivity peaks men over 45 are reappearing widely at factory gates and business offices.

It is evident from the above statement by a reputable government agency that the need for unionism becomes more important with each passing day of our present postwar boom.

The IBEW has always been in the vanguard of AFL unions in the fight to protect the jobs of oldsters. This fight has continued in three ways: By the inclusion in all IBEW contracts for utility workers of strict seniority clauses, by strict adherence to these clauses when layoffs are impending or when subterfuges are used to get rid of the oldsters; and by making a pension plan available IBEW members who desire to subscribe to it.

The government report says that the layoff rates are lower for older than for younger men. However, once those over 45 are let out they have a far harder time landing new jobs.

"It is quite customary to restrict hiring of new workers to those under 40 or 45 years of age, without taking into account the physical and mental capacity of the individual worker," the agency pointed out.

AGE LIMIT CONDEMNED

Condemning this artificial age barrier, the agency declared that it "does a great disservice to those who, regardless of age, continue to be as well or better qualified by experience and capacities as the younger workers." The agency, however, cited the encouraging fact that in union plants seniority provisions of collective bargaining contracts bolster job stability for the older workers.

Ragweed pollen, the bane of hay-fever victims, is light and dry and is carried long distances by the wind.
The Keeper Speaks About the 'Island'

The UWUA keepers of the captives in the Four Bay PG&E divisions defend themselves in a recent bulletin. They became the keepers, they say, due to neglect of the Bay Division by IBEW for over 20 years.

The IBEW, the Bulletin says, "was not interested in organizing the PG&E workers until the CIO entered the field.

The IBEW policy has never been to raid existing unions. When the employes of any company decide for themselves that they want to become members, the IBEW welcomes such employees and puts all its resources at their disposal. The employees of the Four Bay divisions, by a large majority voted to leave the UWUA last November. Only UWUA refusal to recognize the will of the people they have represented so badly has kept IBEW preference from being an official fact today.

The UWUA resistance to the will of its members cannot prevail indefinitely and an NLRB election will soon prove that fact.

The UWUA type of unionism—top level policy dictation that has its roots in the notorious company union, the Brotherhood of Consolidated Edison employees (comprising 50 per cent of the UWUA membership)—has even been able to put up a passable front during the current campaign. The lead story about grievances appearing in this issue will prove that.

The fact remains that with the 5,000 PG&E Bay Division employees itching for the day when they can send their UWUA keepers back to New York Consolidated Edison through an IBEW NLRB vote, the UWUA "island" is spongy indeed.

INACTION OF UWUA

(Continued from Page 2) nated altogether in some classifications previously covered in the contract.

DEALS

When the UWUA has taken grievances into its committee, decisions were made without giving the aggrieved party a hearing; decisions were arrived at behind the scenes.

The IBEW Grievance Committee will have additional and more detailed evidence available for a report in a future edition of Utility Facts.

Meanwhile the IBEW reiterates that it is willing to have the UWUA process any of these "beefs" through the grievance committee in the approved manner.

As the steward of the existing contract, the UWUA is duty-bound to protect its contract regardless of who may be involved in violations of its provisions.

Unionists are not built overnight. They neither resemble skyscrapers, locomotives, automobiles, nor crops. They are made of an uncertain, unpredictable human element. So even an army offers a good parallel, because union men are required to think, to reason and to forecast. Merely to take orders is not a union man's business. Mechanical wheel and turn under the bawling of a top-sargent's direction is not enough.

It is a singular presence of workers in an organization; names entered on a list in the book is not enough. They are constantly growing in their strength, and the more they grow, the more difficult it becomes to police the union and preserve its virtues.

IBEW WINS PAY FROM RUNAWAY BOSS

An attempt by a large corporation to deprive its employees of accrued vacation benefits was thwarted in an important decision handed down through the American Arbitration Association.

The adversaries were Local 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Sylvania Wabosh Corp., which moved its plant to Pennsylvania thereby throwing 600 New York workers out of jobs.

The company argued that since the contract eligibility date for vacation allowances was July 1, 1949, and since they had closed down the plant several months earlier, no vacation allowances need be paid out.

In addition, the company argued that the contract made no provision for payment of accrued vacation benefits.

The union lawyers argued that through no fault of the workers, they were deprived of accrued vacation benefits and that the shutdown and transfer to Pennsylvania was accompanied solely to avoid liability of paying vacations.

In his decision, Arbitrator Sidney L. Cahn held that vacation pay "should be regarded as additional compensation for work already performed in order to enable the employee to take a rest period."

He continued:

OPINION

"It is my opinion that the claims for payment of accrued vacation benefits are claims for wages already earned, so long as the employee has fulfilled the seniority requirements of the contract. . . . Unilateral action on the part of the employer in closing down the plant, cannot void rights which an employee has previously acquired under the contract.

"It might be argued that a finding, such as is here made, places an unjustified burden on the employee, by requiring him to finance his vacation out of his own pocket. But this is a concept which has been abjured in business despite financial reverses. Such, however, is not the fact. The only burden based on the employer is to pay its employees for something which they have already earned."

GREEN, TOBIN SCOFF AT FEARS

Boston.—AFL President William Green and Secretary of Labor Tobin express agreement in public addresses here that the nation's economy is on a sound basis and that there is no serious threat of an imminent depression. They spoke at the convention of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor.

Mr. Green stressed that mass purchasing power must be kept at a high level in order to provide a ready cash market for the products of farms and factories.

AFL unions, he said, are therefore going to continue to press for wage increases wherever such increases are justified by business conditions.

Exorbitantly high prices, the AFL chief declared, were an important factor in depressing sales. Through high prices, he charged, manufacturers were forced to charge customers high prices for their products, as in the clothing industry, consumers responded with large volume purchases and profits were not reduced.

Secretary of Labor Tobin emphasized the need for improvement
REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

San Francisco Unit 3

Last week, in this column, we reported to some length the important committee meeting to be held in Oakland on Aug. 29. Since then Unit 3’s membership met and discussed plans to assure a large attendance at this meeting. Actions voted by the membership to accomplish this were as follows:

1. Notice announcing the meeting to be on the front page of the next issue of UTIL.
2. A committee was charged with responsibility to get out special letters announcing the meeting to be sent to all the most active members in our unit.
3. A further follow-up on these letters was a call for volunteers to meet at our union office on Friday evening, Aug. 26, for the purpose of calling these members and making a final appeal for their attendance.
4. The Publicity Committee was charged with responsibility to get out a leaflet announcing the meeting.
5. Be sure to attend this meeting. A complete program for a new agreement after the election, will be hammered out. Come and participate in this important job—Monday, Aug. 28, 8 p.m., IBEW Hall, 1918 Grove St., Oakland.

Bro. Snyder, IBEW representative, reported he would attend the next meeting of Santa Rosa’s Unit 4. Plans will be made to attend Local 1245’s next membership meeting.

Bro. Snyder reported he had received letters from two of our members stating they had notified PG&E to take them off the check-off list. July pay checks the dues money had been deducted. Bro. Snyder called PG&E and asked for an explanation. Upon checking the records, the company stated that in each case the notice to stop dues deductions had not been received by them until early July which was too late. The intervening time was the payroll was made up on July 3. The company stated there would be no further deductions made from these two members’ pay checks.

Unit 3 Publicity Committee

Santa Rosa Unit No. 4

The recent meeting held in Santa Rosa by L. U. No. 1324, Unit No. 4 was attended by a very active membership.

Int’l Rep. Snyder introduced Bro. Gene Hastings from Unit No. 1, Martinez, who gave a good talk concerning their activities in that area, and that they are all behind L. U. No. 1324 in its fight to put “one organization on the system.” He stated that they have asked L. U. No. 324 to consider their plans to discuss joint organizational strategy.

Int’l Rep. Snyder reported on the various issues involved at the present time in the campaign, and stated that grievances were mounting all over the system, not only L. U. 1324 but also in the UWUA camp, and that UWUA, who hold a “quickie contract” is evidently, from their record, unable to do anything about it.

Membership discussion brought out the fact that some UWUA workers in the area are now beginning to see the benefits of “one organization on the system” in view of what is happening to their conditions at the present time.

The economic program of L. U. No. 1324 was thoroughly discussed and plans made to send a large delegation to the meeting in Oakland on Aug. 29, at 1918 Grove St., Porter Hall.

It was the consensus of opinion that this was the type of program that would insure real benefits to all concerned.

Delegates will also attend L. U. No. 1324’s executive board meeting in San Francisco on Aug. 18.

A program was discussed and passed to attend L. U. No. 1324 meeting in Santa Rosa on Aug. 23 in order to discuss joint organizational work.

Our members are waiting for the election date in order to sink the “UWUA Island” and put one organization in its place.

—Publicity Committee, Santa Rosa

Oakland Unit 7

We held a special meeting Aug. 17 at which time we voted to accept the economic program of Local 1324.

Of special interest to us was proposal No. 6 which reads:

“Grievance machinery set up that will be uniform throughout the four divisions and properly enforced to the letter of the agreement.”

We are certain that it will be a red letter day for all units when we have unity with one organization on the PG&E system — the IBEW — and are in a position to bring order out of the chaos which now exists in the present UWUA grievance machinery.

Unit No. 7 members are anxious for the election date to be set by the NLRB. We feel that the election is certain to mean victory for the IBEW.

Atomic Jobs Not For Child Workers

Employment of minors between 16 and 18 years of age in workrooms, where radioactive isotopes and other radioactive substances are manufactured, used or stored has been prohibited by the Atomic Energy Act.

The Atomic Energy Commission is already enforcing elaborate safety precautions in plants and contracting laboratories under its jurisdiction. The order, therefore, will affect chiefly the laboratories not directly under the supervision of the Commission, but will affect the production of the purchase of isotopes and other radioactive substances from it in increasing quantities.

AFL Radio Spot Thursday

Starting July 5, the American Federation of Labor began a nation-wide radio program over the American Broadcasting Company network.

The program is entitled “As We See It,” and consists of a news commentary by James Crowley and interviews with labor leaders and public officials on topics of vital interest.

The program will be broadcast every Thursday night for the rest of the year between 9:30 and 9:45 o’clock, Pacific Standard Time.

Label Week Coming Soon

National Union Label Week will be held this year from September 3 to September 10.

It is imperative that the organized workers of California recognize the importance of this campaign to support the producers of union goods.

The fundamental purpose of this annual AFL demonstration is to draw public attention to the many excellent products which contribute to better living and which are manufactured by American workers receiving good wages, under healthy, sanitary conditions.

Governor Warren has been asked to proclaim Union Label Week as an official part of the California calendar for 1949.

A Special Thanks to the AFL Radio Spot

A specialist says smoking makes women’s voices harsh. If you don’t agree, flick some ashes on the rug.

Mrs. Professor—“Darling, do you know that you haven’t kissed me for three weeks?”

Astonished Professor—“Good heavens! Then whom have I been kissing?”

A farmer was asked to buy a bicycle. “A bicycle won’t eat its head off,” said the salesman. “They’re cheap now, and I can let you have one for $35.”

“I guess I’d rather put the $35 into a cow,” said the farmer, reflectively.

“Ha-ha,” laughed the salesman, “you’d look mighty foolish, riding around your farm on a cow, now, wouldn’t you?”

“Well, I dunno,” said the farmer, “no more foolish than I would milking a bicycle.”

EQUALITY FOR ALL

This summer sees millions of young Americans graduating from school, college and many more from high school. One and all, they enter the world as free men—free to go as far and as fast as their individual talents will take them. The son of the immigrant parents will have every bit as good a chance as the son of an industrial tycoon. If there is a future President in this year’s graduating class, he may just as likely come from a carpenter’s or a miner’s family as from a bank president. That is America.

Last year an obviously hard-worked and foreign-born couple sat in the audience at the graduating exercises of a large eastern university. Among the graduating students was their eldest son. During the address of the president of the university, who wore his academic robes, the little old lady turned to her husband and asked: “What he say?”

“Who?”

“That man in big, black nightgown.”

“Him? Oh, he say school is out.”

Some people have exceptionally high standards for other people.