Progress on Basic Gas Proposals

A draft of basic proposals to improve conditions for gas department workers has been completed and circulated to the members and employees in this section.

The proposals are the result of numerous committee meetings and discussions with employees in this department and just as soon as we get your comments we will present them to the company.

In them an effort has been made to remedy some of the glaring deficiencies that affect not only job security, but definitions, and lines of progression, but wages as well. For establishment of definite provisions to cover these categories will result in upgrading of personnel throughout the department.

It has taken a long time to get all of the pertinent information in digest it, and formulate remedies. This is so mainly because of the scant attention given to the interest of workers in this department by the UWUA when it was in the contract saddle.

It is also further evidence the IBEW is giving full attention to the needs of its members in all departments. These needs were so sadly neglected under the UWUA that undue time is needed in sifting and gathering information, then acting on it.

However, we make progress on all fronts, and in all departments. The union job is never finished.

IBEW SERVICE REACHES ALL PG&E PROPERTY

Through the IBEW grievance procedure a Shasta Division employee recently was reinstated and awarded one week’s back pay because he had been laid off arbitrarily.

UWUA Please Note!

UWUA members can, as a result of the carelessness of their officials with the truth, make themselves $5,000. Just turn to the last page.

Before You Sign — Think!

The pledge cards now being circulated by the UWUA are harmless looking little things.

Some employees have thoughtlessly signed them to accommodate some fellow worker with the feeling that “they don’t mean anything anyway.” Nothing could be further from the facts.

IBEW Local 1245 now has over 8,500 dues-paying members—and the roster continues to grow. Recently we had to expand our offices to take care of this healthy growth. An additional expansion is in the offing.

These 8,500 members are paying dues voluntarily, though they are higher than those of the FOUR BIT union. With such evidence from the PG&E worker of his IBEW preference, IBEW Local 1245 knows that it can easily survive any election.

However, with over 8,500 out of a possible 12,500 PG&E employees voluntarily paying dues, the IBEW can hardly be enthusiastic about entering into another election campaign.

The IBEW fought for over a year to have the last election held.

Organizing Off System Making Great Progress

The “One Organization on the System” slogan bought by PG&E workers in the election a year ago continues to expand. The Local 1245 utility family grows. As it grows, the collective bargaining scale continues to weigh more favorably for PG&E workers—members and non-members alike.

With the great progress made among municipal utility workers in Santa Clara recently, IBEW Local 1245 is now in position to begin negotiations for improvements in wages and conditions. Mayor Toledo and the Santa Clara Council were slated to sit down to talk contract, the first meeting being on June 4.

Meanwhile, negotiations are certain to take place with City of Lodi officials, where IBEW Local 1245 has organized 97 per cent of the employees under its banner.

One purpose of that election, for which the IBEW petitioned, was to eliminate the negative, minority dual union role the CIO was playing on the system.

Today that minority faction is still smaller and further discredited. But it would like to force the IBEW to suspend its normal activities on behalf of better condition to meet its election challenge.

Then it can sit back and feed the fires of discontent it has kindled with charges of IBEW failures on grievances, policing of the contract, etc.

The tactics of the UWUA during the past few years have cost the PG&E much in employee dollars and much in progress. If the union can qualify their election petition with enough pledge card signatures, they can again succeed in throwing collective bargaining on the system into a vacuum while the long, cumbersome NLRB process grinds.

Meanwhile, only the management gains from such tactics.

So before you sign a pledge card—THINK!!

Local 1245 Gets Top Rate for Sacto Wkrs.

IBEW Local 1245 representatives have in recent weeks completed several negotiations with utility companies off the PG&E system. All of them brought affected employees the full 10 per cent allowable under the Wage Stabilization Board formula.

Sacramento City Lines workers got increases of 8c an hour plus a retroactive settlement of $25. The rates paid on this utility are now the highest paid anywhere in the nation.

Employees of the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District got a raise of 5.8 per cent as a result of IBEW negotiations. Also, the Sierra-Pacific members of IBEW Local 1245 got an increase amounting to 6.4 per cent. Both raises were the maximum allowable under the WSB formula.

PG&E Union Shop Possible Soon

IBEW Local 1245 now has more than 8,500 dues-paying members—more than enough to qualify a petition for a union shop election.

However, to make sure that this coveted goal of every union man is achieved, we are waiting for our membership to reach 10,000 before filing.

At the rate new members are coming in, that goal should be reached in the near future.

Statistics of the Department of Labor show that where members of unions such as IBEW Local 1245 are given an opportunity to express themselves on the union shop through NLRB elections, that they voted in favor of the union shop 99 per cent of the time.

The union shop would make it possible to reach the free-rider and those who drop their conscience money with the Four Bit Union to pay for their fair share of the gains that accrue through membership in the majority union.

A study of the vote in last year’s election indicates that the union shop would easily pass on the PG&E. Of approximately 10,000 employees who voted at that time, slightly over 200 voted for “no union.”

You can help the union shop idea along by refusing to sign the pledge cards of the UWUA when they come around, and by urging your friends and fellow workers on the system to join the IBEW.

FOUR-BIT DUES COULDN’T BUY THIS:

PG&E employees working in the East Bay Division recently had over $500 awarded to them for retroactive travel time, after filing for it through the IBEW grievance machinery.

Need $5,000?

Who don’t. The UWUA, failing easily into its old habit of telling the big ones, has made it possible for you to collect $5,000. See the back page.
The Free Rider's Creed
Composer Unknown

The dues-paying union member is my shepherd; I shall not want. He provideth me with paid holidays and vacations. So I may lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. He restoreth my back pay; He guideth my welfare without cost to me. Even though I stray in the paths of unrighteousness—for my money's sake. Yet, though I alibi and pay no dues from generation to generation, I fear no evil, for he pays my cost to me, of unrightousness—for my house he hath built forever—and allow him to pay the bill. Amen.

They pledge you to support a dead organization, discredited by the great majority of PG&E workers in an election last year.

The union which holds the bargaining rights in three divisions for clerical workers—was one where I worked before. So when I started for PG&E these lines of progression and seniority. They are also taking an increasing job bidding rights were negotiated through the existing provisions. The IBEW strives constantly to strengthen them in negotiations. The IBEW has had such a plan in operation for certain industry groups within the IBEW for several years, paid partly by members and partly by employees. It has been, and is being, improved from year to year. The IBEW originated this pension plan.

"In addition, where employees of a particular union have not seen fit to demand pensions as a part of the contract covering them, pensions have been available to individual IBEW members who want them through the IBEW's International Pension Fund which has a reserve of over $30,000,000.

"When PG&E employees have made the IBEW their official bargaining agent, it is prepared to bargain for whatever kind of pension plan the majority of employees want. "IBEW officials point out that there are many kinds of pension plans. Some, such as the CIO plan, tend to tie a worker to his job ... It was announced several weeks ago that the pension objective was to be taken up with the company in negotiations to be opened soon. And the IBEW strategy of refusing to lump pension demands with wage demands in the last negotiations is now justified. Wage increases of the full 70 per cent wage formula allowable took $3,500,000 out of the company budget. Both wages and pensions may have suffered if both had had to come out of the PG&E kitty at that time. The IBEW today is still seeking to foster the sort of discontent—the same sort of pie in the sky—that PG&E employees refused to buy in the elections a year ago. A year ago, before the election, the UWUA was offering pie in the sky at slightly higher prices. Today you can get UWUA pie in the sky for four-bits. It's still high at any price.
WHAT YOU LOST

The UWUA’s so-called Newscaster, in conjunction with handbills, has recently circulated among some Divisions of the PG&E propaganda designed to stir up enough dissatisfaction with IBEW Local 1245 and its officials to win clout for its pledge card campaign. The deadline is set for getting the proper number of pledge cards necessary to obtain an NLRB election hearing is June 30, according to the UWUA.

If the UWUA and the Newscaster run true to past form, the closer that date approaches, the more vicious this propaganda will become. The UWUA’s biggest lies will be dropped when the time element is sure to make them even more difficult to refute.

The UWUA seems to have learned one thing from its unsuccessful election campaign a year ago. That is that the character defamation, the mud-slinging, and the bald-faced lie techniques that failed before to bamboozle or confuse the thinking of most PG&E workers will avail it nothing in its pledge card campaign. The same techniques are now practiced in more subtle manner. But the deceit is there just the same.

The Old Deceit

A recent issue of the Newscaster, practicing the new subtle deceit, heads up a lead article: What You Lost. A box is set up purporting to show the IBEW vs. the CIO score on various gains.

Under the column of wage gains, the UWUA claims that since September 1950 and the present time it got for Southern California Gas employees a 10% wage increase. Also an escalator clause providing for an increase IF the cost of living rises. Also improvements in working conditions; a paid pension plan. A health and medical plan. An increase IF the cost of living rises. Also improvements in working conditions; a paid pension plan. A health and medical plan.

The great majority of workers in the down-state utilities are members of the IBEW. In recent years the IBEW in that area has set the pace at the bargaining table, despite the fact that the UWUA minority position has in many instances nullified IBEW efforts to secure maximum benefits in all categories affecting welfare and working conditions.

We welcome any concrete gains made in any district by any utility company. But as long as management can use the mud-slinging, and the bald-faced lie techniques that failed before to bamboozle or confuse the thinking of most PG&E workers, we will not be able to secure what we consider maximum gains for the people we represent.

Precedent Is Fine

At New York Consolidated Edison, where the UWUA has an entrenched position with management, and where last year, after several big utilities election losses to the IBEW, consolidated Edison thought it wise to bolster the UWUA position with something more than the usual “crumbs” the UWUA got 10 cents an hour plus an additional 5 cents six months later. But now the UWUA Box Score is talking in terms of pennies and not percentages. A comparison by categories will show that the IBEW will considerably better for PG&E workers. A paid hospital and welfare plan, of which no details are given, is also claimed. Fine. Wonderful. More precedent. Incidentally, there is no minority union, no opposing faction on Consolidated Edison to complicate and impede negotiations. On PG&E there is the defeated and discredited UWUA.

During the same period the UWUA claims for Detroit Edison workers 11 cents and 4 cents—still talking in terms of pennies rather than in percentages—which averages out to less than the IBEW obtained for PG&E workers during the same period. An escalator clause was also added. Improvements in pension benefits are listed along with sundry other gains.

The box score is completed with similar gains claimed at Boston Edison. And with the completion the UWUA runs out of steam, for it has covered its principle representations.

The Biggest Gain

Under the heading of “other gains” for the IBEW on the PG&E system it lists in capital letters GAINS—none. Perhaps the biggest gain the IBEW made for PG&E workers in the physical forces during the period listed by the UWUA was the elimination of the dual bargaining system that had been in effect on the system because of the UWUA’s long minority entrenchment. We mean the elimination of the UWUA from the bargaining table insofar as the physical forces are concerned.

For that minority representation, operating along lines of the National UWUA-Consolidated Edison pattern, was and is directly responsible for all of the questions the UWUA raises today with reference to “other gains”.

The UWUA charges no working conditions improvement, no hospital welfare plans, no paid pensions, no escalator clause, no re-opening date.

Paychecks First

Let’s take the last one first. The IBEW has developed a policy—quite successful until the wage freeze came along—of avoiding long-term commitments on behalf of its members on wages. This flexible wage policy permitted representatives to go before management for increases whenever they felt that the economic fortunes of management and the economic needs of the workers could justify them. Under this policy wage increases were theoretically possible as often as every 90 days.

Such a policy was especially necessary after the long NLRB proceedings and study that followed, the UWUA practiced the unpardonable trade union sin of wholesale neglect of grievance procedure to curry favor and to build pressure against many who were partial to the IBEW One Organization program.

The UWUA during this period went even further, and under the guise of local autonomy, negotiated away valuable system-wide seniority rights affecting various classifications, also to curry favor, and to freeze into jobs known UWUA sympathizers.

Conditions Protected

Then in November of 1950, after the NLRB had ordered an election to be held in February, about a month after the existing UWUA contract for the Bay Divisions was due to run out, the IBEW proposed an extension of that contract to prevent long-established working conditions from breaking down in the interim between expiration date and such time as negotiations could begin after the election. It got the UWUA to agree to this extension.

When the IBEW finally, more than a year after it had sought an election, won collective bargaining rights on a system-wide basis for the first time it found itself facing these problems:

No wage raises for PG&E workers for more than 14 months.

Grievances—scores and scores of them unsettled by the UWUA.

Valuable security provisions negotiated away by the UWUA.

Two IBEW locals on the system. One IBEW Organization had been promised.

In addition, the IBEW had promised not to go in with any pension or other plan for negotiation until the workers themselves had an opportunity to express their wishes on this important matter.

The same went for all other items to be negotiated, including the necessity of determining by rank and file participation—the desires of the entire membership on all fringe items and improvement of working conditions.

Action at Last

In other words, out of the void that had been in effect for more than a year because of the UWUA’s policies, there were suddenly scores of things to do—things to do that had to be done by IBEW promised—through the democratic procedure of committee hearings, unit participation and action, etc.

With these things to do in front of them, IBEW representatives determined that the most essential thing to do was to get a wage increase at once.

There were three of these—there would have been more but for the wage freeze—with negotiations for uniform conditions, improved conditions, pensions and other items deliberately sidestepped until the will of the membership could be determined on these matters, the plans detailed and worked out, the proper backing for them organized.

There you have the IBEW program.

When You Lost in 1950 was the UWUA millstone around your necks. The UWUA had its chance to get the program it is talking about now. It has covered its principle representations.

YOU can make this pay off for YOU by scoring the UWUA pledge cards.
Let's Face the Facts of Life

In February of 1950, PG&E employees went to the polls to pick a bargaining representative. The IBEW hung its campaign hat on the "One Organization" proposition. The soundness of that proposition was evident to everyone. The UWUA, at that time constituting a sizeable minority bargaining force on the system, was unable to pursue legitimate objectives of its members because of the constant interference of its national officers. Local officials of the UWUA were themselves fed up with this interference and obstructionism. Many of them bought the IBEW "One Organization" proposal along with a two to one majority of PG&E employees.

The results of the election show that the proposition is thoroughly fed up with the spectre of local autonomy as practiced on the PG&E by the UWUA.

They found no merit in a UWUA setup where autonomous local union officials were running the system at the same time in different directions with one ball; with different interpretations of contractual provisions by different autonomous local union officials; with the prospect that the action of one autonomous local official could nullify any needed economic action undertaken to back up contractual demands; nor with the great expense needed to maintain the separate autonomous UWUA union offices.

Yet today the UWUA is back with a program, a cure-all for PG&E employees needs based on a baker's dozen of autonomous local unions.

As other stories in this issue will show, the UWUA is itself responsible for most of the wage and condition deficiencies that exist on this system today. And the UWUA's refusal to accept the NLRB election mandate of PG&E workers given to the IBEW is responsible for the continued assistance of the IBEW International Office.

At the present time I. O. Representative Bill Smith, Acting Business Manager, and I. O. Representative Merritt Snyder are assisting IBEW Local 1245 in making good on the promises made to PG&E employees before the election. When these promises had been made good—a smooth-running union business organization setup, pension plans, uniform grievance and job-bidding procedure, mass reclassifications effected—when the I. O. In other words, is satisfied that it has made good on its own responsibilities to PG&E workers, its representatives will bow out of the PG&E picture.

The services of these representatives are being delayed at the expense of the I. O. Their salaries or personal interests are in no way affected by the dues paid by PG&E members. The recent raise in dues was instituted for the sole purpose of keeping Local 1245 on a sound financial footing—a pay-as-you-go footing—that will permit the Local to continue to give to all PG&E employees the services they have indicated that they want.

The International realizes that wages on the PG&E had not kept pace with the rapid rise in living costs. Because it was and always is concerned about the effect of unusual economic circumstances on the welfare of its members, the International on March 12 was successful in negotiating wage increases for PG&E members amounting to more than $3,250,000. This gave individual PG&E employees monthly increases ranging from a minimum of $13.50 to $25.00.

This was accomplished in spite of the closed contract the UWUA says we made with the Company. And the UWUA's coat-tails.

It is admitted that the long period of amalgamation needed to get the former Bay Divisions Local 1324 and Local 1245 integrated in the interest of the One Organization promise has been a trying one. Some toes had to be stepped on here and there; probably the normal union business suffered in spots during this period.

But it could have been behind us long ago if the UWUA minority consented to an election when the proposition was first broached.

However, the trial and error period is past. Incompetents and prima donnas have been shown the wayside. Some good union men have taken their seats in union affairs on the system for the good of the One Organization proposition.

The organizational period made necessary by the UWUA has provided an excellent opportunity to observe those who have been charged with carrying out the important union work on the system. When the elections are held, the best of these should emerge to carry on.

The IBEW respectfully calls these points to the attention of PG&E employees. Remember when the UWUA presents you with a pledge card to sign. Your signature could well help in returning to the system the chaotic and hopeless bargaining setup that existed until UWUA was a union in being and not just a paper union.

Let's build for the future with IBEW—the union with the most members, the greatest economic strength, most progressive and American union methods, the most democratic utility union organization—YOUR UNION.

ARE YOU A FREE RIDER?

Don't let your fellow workers carry the burden of supporting your conditions. Join the IBEW now and pay your fair share.

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