Taxes And Wages Attract Attention

By RONALD T. WEAKLEY

The month of April is a rough one. The tax man cometh and his bite is deep.

The Federal surtax charge is still on the books despite a change of administration voted by the people last year.

Our State governments continue to raise taxes, particularly in California, where a change of administration was voted in 1966.

Past promises regarding meaningful tax relief have not been kept by the new administrations to date.

Promises of future tax cuts won’t help our members this month. The tax collector won’t accept promises as payment. The minor “blow-backs” from surplus California funds derived from overtaxation will be of little help to us, particularly when such piddling sums are scheduled to become available at a politically-motivated rate designed to “peak out” just prior to the 1970 State elections.

So much for the tax bit, which is only one item among many involved in the galloping cost of living problem. Higher costs for insurance, interest, food, clothing, housing, transportation, education, medical and hospital care, recreation, and even funeral expenses require Union action designed to gain some needed relief through negotiated wage increases this year.

Those utility unions and utility companies which we usually consider to be part of our wage pattern area, have been settling so far this year for a minimum of 6 1/4 percent.

The foregoing factors, along with the Unit Recommendations on 1969 wage PG&E proposals, will be considered at our May 3 and 4 joint Executive Board-Advisory Council meeting for the purpose of developing our general wage policy for 1969.

It is expected that PG&E negotiations will commence early in May. The parties have agreed to move the reopening notice ahead in order to provide more time for bargaining toward the normal July 1 effective date.

Although the PG&E wage negotiations will soon become the major endeavor for Local 1245, we are now and will continue to be engaged in wage negotiations with many other employers this year which will be carried on under the general wage policy to be adopted at our May 3 and 4 joint leadership meeting.

Again, it can be noted that Local 1245 is the only real force available to the employees of the various employers with whom we deal, so far as pushing for wage improvements is concerned this year and every year.

It also behooves us to beef up our ranks to the highest possible level as we put Local 1245’s negotiating machinery in motion for the economic benefit of its members and their families.

Seek out those who have not yet joined our Union. Point out that the more support our negotiating committees have behind them, the better the employers respond in terms of trying to satisfy the needs and the desires of their employees through acceptable settlements.

Please send any corrections of name, address or zip code to P.O. Box 584
Walnut Creek, Calif. 94597

(Name)

(Street Address)

(City)

(State and Zip Code)
Dear Mitch:

It pleased me to receive your Christmas card and note. Although my work over here is most interesting, it is void of the competitive spirit that used to be so common. To tell you the truth, I miss your aggressive and intelligent approach to problems that are as important to companies as they are to people and the unions.

The worker in the United States has, in my opinion, much to be thankful for. Generally speaking, he is represented by a good union and his productive efforts are recognized by a competent management.

The common laborer in Tehran causes one to meditate. He eats out of a small bowl. It is filled with stew. He dips chunks of Farsi of liquid. He eats sitting on the floor, sidewalk or dirt with his legs crossed. He covers his face with a rag to keep the insects away and he slumbers. He seems to be constantly sifting dirt, using a small round hand sifter that can be handled by one man. You seldom see him rest during his work hours. The only rest he seems to get is during his siesta (about 2 hours in the middle of the day) and at night. During his siesta he will lie flat on his back, in the sun or in the shade. He lies any place. On the sidewalk. On the edge of the street. On a roof top. I saw one sheltered in a manner pale. He covers his face with a rag to keep the insects away and he slumbers.

I have heard that the common laborer’s pay is from 60 to 100 rials a day. This seems to be right from an accuracy viewpoint. It amounts to something between 80 cents and $1.35 in our money.

Do nothing exciting work with a pick and shovel they say one laborer will dig a hole 4x4x4 feet in a day. Watching him, I believe he does better than that. Many are superstitious. It is common to see them work with one pants leg rolled up uncovering a leg. He says that is his strong working leg and he wants to give it air.

For breakfast, lunch and dinner I think the laborer eats about the same thing. Stew and flat Farsi bread about 1¼" thick. It looks like pliable cardboard to me. The meal is called “Ab-e-gush” — a mutton stew with lots of liquid. He eats sitting on the floor, sidewalk or dirt with his legs crossed. He eats out of a small bowl. It is filled with stew. He dips chunks of Farsi breed in it. He seems to have no utensils but his hands. He sits in a circle with his fellow workers and eats and talks. I am sure that he enjoys his meal.

Here the common laborer’s appearance sort of classifies him. He seems to always have a small top covering on his head. (Turkish like) Usually he has patched pants. (Real big patches). His shoes are without backs, either cut out or broken over to allow his heals to protrude. I think if the laborer is steadily employed he owns his own shovel.

Mitch, a recent article in the Iranian Tribune had this to say about the worker’s welfare. “Along with the economic development of the country, it is necessary to expand services concerning the welfare of groups who carry too heavy a burden of such economic development. The workers play an important role in this respect. The problems of working groups are the inability or limited ability to read and write; lack of specialization; malnutrition; inadequacy of environmental sanitation; labour and public health; the relatively low level of pay; prevalence of intermittent employment; limitation of expansion of workers’ unions; and finally lack of suitable housing facilities.”

I am going to close this letter by saying again, the worker in the United States has much to be thankful for.

Sincerely yours,

VERN THOMPSON

A Letter From A Friend

Editor’s Note: Vern Thompson, retired Manager of Industrial Relations for Pacific Gas and Electric Company is now working as a consultant for Harza Engineering Company in Iran. He sent the following note on his observations of conditions there. We thought it interesting and should be passed on because of the comparisons it shows and why we as Americans do not understand all of the problems in the Middle East.

Tehran, Iran
27, Jan. ’69

How Other Papers See The News

Our daily press misses no opportunities to point out that advances in wages and fringe benefits gained by workers through union negotiations increase the cost of material goods and service. They go into great detail quoting hourly, weekly and annual wages and predict their impact on the general public.

They seem to take particular delight in “exposing” increases for public employees. As our morning press in an article on October 18 put it “The more of any tax hike that might be due is not on the unions.”

Yet these same publications seldom if ever report increases in salaries and fringe benefits of management and particularly not of top management. This is supposed to be private business and not the business of the public.

But where does the money for the salaries and fringe benefits of top management come from? It surely does not grow on trees. It comes from the same source that wages and fringe benefits for workers come from — namely from the purchases and users of goods and services — the general public.

Let us examine this rationally. The salaries and wages of our city and county officials and employees come from the people of the community in the form of taxes and fees. That is public business and so the press broadcasts them. We do not object.

Now where do the salaries and wages of the officials and employees of the Gas Company, the Electric Company, Telephone Company come from? It is self-evident that they came from the same people of the community.

But here we come to a curious anomaly as far as our daily press is concerned. The wages and fringe benefits of the employees of these companies are bazoned forth on the grounds that they affect the general public, in the public interest. In other words, place the onerous burden on the workers and no one is apt to look further. So, they reason, since the salaries and fringe benefits of the top management of these companies are private business and no damn business of the public, the less they know about the better it is for everybody — particularly for top management.

So if you were to go through the files of our daily press you can find out the wages of the workers but never the salaries of the officials.

Incidentally, what are the salaries and fringe benefits of top management of our daily press?

That, too, is private business.

But where does the money to pay these come from?

Well, it comes from the dimes you pay for the paper and from the advertising revenue which, in the last analysis you pay for when you purchase anything from any advertiser in the daily press.

Yes — let the public be informed in all matters of public interest. Let us have no double standard — one for labor and another for management.

Let’s have the truth and the whole truth — “Labor Press”

April 10, 1969

Mr. Ronald T. Weakley, Business Manager
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,
Local No. 1245,
1918 Grove Street
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Weakley:

The wholehearted backing of organized labor is vital to the success of our United Crusade campaign.

We are aware that your organization supported the 1968 Crusade drive, and should be recognized in connection with the campaign at Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

Please accept the appreciation of those connected with the UBAC campaign and the 178 agencies which benefit from your efforts and contributions. Please convey this appreciation to your membership.

We look forward to your support in the 1969 campaign.

Sincerely yours,

Peter R. Ward
1969 Campaign Chairman
United Bay Area Crusade
The use of apprentices has been the means of perpetuating the knowledge and skills of artisans and craftsmen for centuries. Ancient records reveal that they were used as early as 2100 B.C. by the Babylonian Emperors to see that the arts of various trades were transferred from one generation to the next. There were also apprentices used in Egypt, Greece, and Rome when they were dominant examples of society. The recorded rules for apprenticeships were established in 1562 by Queen Elizabeth of England.

Throughout the course of history, the means of transferring the arts of a particular craft to the next generation has undergone great change. In the days of the guilds, apprentices were apprenticed to a master and all training was on the job. They worked under a contract which provided only for board and room, and lived under the rules set down by the master—which usually called for working from day light until dark. (See REWARD poster.) When his contract had been fulfilled, the apprentice was turned out to become a journeyman.

**20 DOLLARS**

**REWARD**

**RAN AWAY FROM THE**

**SUBSCRIBER ON THURS. MORNING LAST, JOHN WHITAKER,**

an indented Apprentice to the Brass Casting and Finishing Trade. Had on when he left his boarding house, a new hat and a blue roundabout. The said John Whitaker has a brother in New Orleans, and is supposed to want to make his way thither. He is about sixteen years of age, straight short hair, rather sharp gray eye, acquaintance and sallow complexion. All persons are forbid harbouring the said lad, under the penalty of the law.

Should the said John Whitaker wish to return to his employer, and will give information respecting brass castings, etc., that are missing, that will prove his innocence, every thing that he has received will be forgiven, and he will be treated as heretofore... which is strongly recommended to him, as every step will be taken and no expense spared to recover the said Lad. The above reward will be paid to any person who may give a clue to him, so that he is recovered.

NEW YORK, Aug. 17, 1835.

L. LEWIS, 33 White St.

The terms “journeyman” and “apprentice” were very descriptive of the functions they performed. “Apprehender,” Latin, meaning to comprehend, became apprentice or a learner. “Journey” meaning day, and to go from place to place for a day, became a journey. A journeyman was a traveling day worker until he acquired enough worldly goods to become a master and could open his own shop. This, of course, changed with the Industrial Revolution as the cottage factory was replaced by the use of more complicated and costly machinery and tools. We still find the use of journeyman in the sense of traveling day worker prevalent in the building trades work.

The old means of selecting apprentices was to force people into a trade through the will of a master, and the parent, guardian or the law. The laws of the past had provided for apprenticeships as a means of punishment for debt, idleness or relief for the poor.

The training processes and the selectivity of those entering a trade today have of necessity become more complicated. Changing technology has made academic knowledge more important. The natural talents of people to become more proficient in one craft over another as well as the need to provide job satisfaction and motivation, called for greater selectivity of placement in a craft.

Today’s apprenticeship can be more likened to an internship such as those used in the professions—as a junior partner in a law firm. The apprentice earns while he learns. As he becomes more proficient he progresses up the wage ladder until he has qualified himself by training, education and experience to carry on the functions of a fully-fledged mechanic in his particular field.

Local 1245, under the leadership of Business Manager Ronald T. Weakley, made its first contract proposals on formalized apprenticeship in 1952. These proposals called for fully indentured joint programs with tripartite participation of the Union, Company, and the State Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

Prior agreements involving apprentice classifications had been worked out shortly after World War II to determine apprenticeable classifications under which certain veterans became entitled to assistance from the Federal Government in the purchases of tools which were needed to practice the arts of each craft. These subsidies have long since run out but a new program has evolved providing a stipulated monetary allowance for training periods of one month for each month of active duty in the Armed Forces with a maximum of 36 months. The allowance is graduated and diminishes as progression through the program is made and allowances are greater for those with dependents. To be eligible the veteran must have been discharged after January 31, 1955, and must be enrolled in a Government-approved program.

The principal objectives of the Union proposals were intended to provide known and understandable qualifications for entry into an apprentice program; defined and realistic standards of achievement for each stipulated period; stipulated time limits for learning and performance standards during each period; the means and methods of record keeping and checking the attainment of the prescribed standards; and finally, once achieved, the revised time limits and procedures set for retaining the apprentice's knowledge and skill, the apprentice would attain journeyman status and pay without having to wait for a posted job opening.

These basic objectives, in one form or another, were contained in each set of the Union bargaining program until 1957. In 1957 agreement was reached to establish a Joint Apprenticeship Committee under provisions of the Agreement (Title 109). The functions were limited to matters of apprenticeship character, or those with dependents. To be eligible the veteran must have been discharged after January 31, 1955, and must be enrolled in a Government-approved program, or in the armed forces of the United States.
The Apprentice Program Includes Academic and "Laboratory" Training

Instructor George L. Catey, left, and Vince Azevedo, Apprentice, are shown performing a differential calibration on a Foxboro Flow Meter. This operation is part of the lab work in the Apprentice Gas Measurement Mechanics School.

All of the Apprentice Programs involve academic and "laboratory" training. Shown above is a "skull session" at one of the Apprentice Lineman Schools. The Apprentices are being instructed in the fundamental operation of a Transformer, and also the various connections to be made.

Two unidentified apprentices are shown working on a problem which was set up to resemble the problems they will encounter in the field. This photo was taken at the Apprentice Fitters School at Potrero.

Apprentice George Hilke, left, is shown receiving some welding instruction from Instructor Emmett Hardy. This welding class is part of the A Fitters School.
Academic And Laboratory Training

Two unidentified apprentices are shown working on a problem involving an Alley-arm at the McCloud-Pit Apprentice Lineman School.

At the Apprentice Lineman School in Kettleman, apprentices are instructed in the use of Rubber Protective Equipment which is shown above.

Curtis Clarkson, Operating Co-ordinator from System Gas Control, is a Guest Instructor for the academic portion of the Gas Measurement Mechanics School.
Social Security is an Investment

Today's young workers can look forward to getting Social Security retirement benefits worth considerably more than the total they will pay into Social Security toward that retirement protection.

In addition, they have survivors and disability insurance under social security that may mean as much as $5,000 to $100,000 in payments to an individual family, should the worker die or becomes disabled for work before retirement.

Excessive calculations continue to circulate, purporting to show that a young worker will not get his money's worth for his social security contributions. The facts show just the opposite.

Even the group of young workers who will be paying into Social Security for an entire working lifetime, under the schedule of contributions now in the law, will get Social Security retirement benefits worth at least 15 to 20 percent more than their own contributions toward those benefits, and that includes an allowance for the interest the contributions might have earned.

There is a practical certainty that they will get a return even higher than that. As wage levels continue to rise, income to the system increases at a faster rate than corresponding benefits liabilities. Benefits can therefore be raised without increasing the contribution rates.

The value of your Social Security protection grows as the economy grows, unlike the usual private insurance contract which promises a fixed amount of money in return for a specified premium. So while a look at the schedule of benefits today's law assures the young worker that Social Security is a good investment, he can look forward to an even greater appreciation in its value.

This article is from the Electrical Worker's Journal.
Government Finds Way to Beat Inflation

By Sidney Margolius
Consumer Expert for Utility Reporter

The government recently has found a way to beat the inflation. You just reduce your standard of living.

Now that the government's "moderate" budget has reached an embarrassing $6,000 a year including taxes for a family of four, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has worked out a new "lower" budget which costs only $5,600.

Who asked for a new "lower" standard? Working families didn't. But the new standard certainly is helpful to employers if hampering to workers seeking wage increases. The old "moderate" budget had been criticized by employers and their spokesmen. Its $10,000 price tag is noticeably out of reach of industrial workers who typically now earn $6,000 or $6,500 a year. Even the name given to the new standard budget is mystifying. BLS doesn't call it an "economy" budget or "near poor" or even a "modest" budget, just a "lower" standard, whatever that means.

One official calls it a budget of "aspiration," meaning, the family aspires to improve itself from that level. Frankly, it looks more like a budget of "frustration." By the time the aspiring (and perspiring) working family reaches the income level necessary to do a little better than this meager budget the cost of living has gone up again.

The new "lower" budget is one of frustration in other ways. We have taken the liberty of bringing the costs up to date to reflect price increases since BLS worked out this budget in the spring of 1967. As the table with this article shows, the "lower" budget allows only $106 a month for rent, including utilities.

The food allotment also requires strict economy. It allows only $1.20 a day per person, including meals away from home. How does the government expect a family to achieve that low cost? By eating more potatoes and less meat. The "lower" budget calls for 10 pounds of "potatoes" a week compared to 81/2 in the "moderate" budget, and allows the family only 111/2 pounds of meat a week compared to 171/4.

The clothing budget is noticeably meager, and it's the woman who pays. Conversely to usual practice, the wife is allowed less than the husband — only about $119 a year to $152 for him. He won't really be much of a dandy on this amount. But he can buy 3 1/2 pairs of shoes a year while the wife could buy only one pair a year. In other words, a half a pair of slacks (say a leg at a time).

The transportation budget also is a problem, especially if you need a car to get to work. For the lower-cost budget, BLS figures that only about half the families could have a car, and at that it would have to be an old car.

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The Safety Scene

Do You Have a Drinking Problem?

It would be interesting to know how many accidents have happened directly or indirectly attributable to alcohol. How many times have wives cried at night because of alcohol in the home? How many times have our children cried themselves to sleep because father or mother were unreasonable and unjustifiably punished them?

There are several roads to self help for the person who is sincerely interested in becoming a more whole individual to his (her) family, the community and the world. First however we should sit down and have a little heart to heart talk with ourselves. Am I drinking too much? Do I snap at my wife, children? Do I get resentful if criticized about my work? Do I hurry home and immediately open a beer, pour a martini, a shot, a nip or what have you? Do I stop in at the local bar every evening for one or two before going home? All of these or any one of them is an indication of abnormal desire. If we fall in one of these (normal) patterns we could start to think perhaps about a possible drinking problem. So then what?

We could go to our Priest, Minister, Rabbi, close friend or relative. Perhaps a psychiatrist could help. However all these people have certain preconceived ideas on the subject of alcohol and probably would not give a true understanding of the problem.

Actually the easiest method to learn about drinking is to ask yourself a few questions. Do I take a drink to be sociable? Do I take a drink to show that I have a big and important job? Do I have in the back of my mind that I should take a drink? Do I feel I can’t work without it? Do I take a drink to please someone else? Do I take a drink to influence people? Do I take a drink when I am sick? Do I take a drink to feel better? Do I take a drink to feel better about myself? Do I believe I need a drink to succeed at my work? Do I believe I need to take a drink if I am tired or in a strange place or when I’m lonely or excited or sad? Do I drink because I believe it is a way of relaxing? Do I take a drink because I feel I need it? Do I take a drink when I am drinking alone? Do I take a drink when I’m alone and no one else is around? Do I take a drink because I am bored?

The subject of a safety meeting was ACCIDENTS. The 5-minute safety talk, "Accidents are Caused, was read. Afterwards a heated discussion arose.

During the full, one member raised his hand to ask a question and accidentally knocked a coat off a rack which fell over the head of a second member. While removing the garment, the temporarily blinded member struck the window behind him with his elbow, scattering glass on the floor. While picking up glass, two others received slight cuts, so the group adjourned.

How Not to Run a Safety Meeting

Not long ago a workman was given the job of covering some large holes in the floor of a wooden elevated work platform to prevent someone from falling through. He decided to place large sheets of plywood over the opening to do the job. While placing a panel of plywood he failed to notice that one edge of the panel was just barely supported at the side of the opening and stepped on the edge of the panel. The panel slipped, tilted, and dropped him many feet below to his death.

One way to prevent this type of accident is to “tack-nail” each panel with a few nails to secure it properly in place, as it is placed. In this case two or three pennies worth of nails would have saved that man’s life.

But, was it only the lack of a few cents worth of nails? Absolutely not! It was not only the lack of a few nails, but more important it was the lack of “safety sense” or a lack of simple “know-how” that killed the man.

In almost every job there are possibilities of injuries—even death. Take a few minutes to ponder on everything you do. Size up each job, each machine, each tool you use, and apply your best “safety sense” to everything you do. Develop the habit of seeking information on the hazards of each job and learn simple “know-how” that might save your life or limb. Always ask, “Can I get hurt if I do the job this way?”

A Penny’s Worth of Nails

The flight to the suburbs, to the “nice neighborhoods” and “good schools” is, in fact, a conservative retreat. The truth is that people whose own status is tenuous cannot afford to be associated with elements in society thought to be inferior. Having run away from the problem, there is no desire to raise it again by helping minority groups.

Why Head Restraints On ’69’s?

Why head restraints? The question is bound to be asked by many new car shoppers this year. It will be prompted by the sight of these very visible new protective devices on showroom cars. The head restraints—two on the front seat of each car—are required by Federal safety standards. They are there for good reason. Head restraints on ’69 cars are provided to substantially reduce the serious neck injuries and chronic disabilities reported by doctors in the nation. (Insurance settlements average considerably higher for this type of injury than for others, so that even if we do not purchase a 1969 car the head restraints still will be of benefit to us by reducing insurance costs.)

“Whiplash” occurs when the head of an auto occupant is snapped sharply backward from the force of a rear-end crash. The head restraints will provide sufficient strength, height and energy absorption to minimize violent backward movement of the head in rear-end crashes. To accomplish this, it is important that, on those models for which they are adjustable, the top of the head restraint be set no lower than the top of the ears.

Anatomy of a Conservative

(Continued from Page 6)

wealth and status, and, socially, because they remind him of what he himself once was and might become again...