EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS UNDER ATTACK

The California Public Utilities Commission on September 16, 1975 stated its intent to eliminate employee discounts from Pacific Gas and Electric Company's rate schedules. Portions of Decision 84902 regarding P.G.& E.'s application for gas and electric rate increases which was filed in August 1973 reads as follows:

"For many years P.G.& E.'s electric and gas tariffs have contained special rate schedules that allow employees to receive a twenty-five percent discount for domestic electric and gas service. These discounts were, in a time of abundant energy and stable utility rates, countenanced as an innocuous tax-free fringe benefit and rationalized as a substitute for monetary compensation that would be subject to personal income taxes. Under present conditions, however, these discounts tend to discourage conservation and, as they apply to the employee's total gas and electric bill, act to increase compensation each time rates are increased, whether by the operation of the electric fuel cost adjustment and gas offset procedures, or by general rate increases.

We recognize that the employees consider the discounts as part of their total pay package. Under present conditions, however, employee discounts for gas and electric service are no longer appropriate. It is our intention, at the first opportunity, consistent with allowing sufficient time for consideration of the elimination of discounts in collective bargaining negotiations, to cancel Schedules DE and G-10."

Upon receiving knowledge of the CPUC's intent, Local 1245, through its attorneys, corresponded with the Commission to express our concern with the position regarding this matter. The following is that correspondence:

October 6, 1975

Mr. William R. Johnson, Secretary
California State Public Utilities Commission
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Our office represents International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245, AFL-CIO, which is the collective bargaining representative of some 16,000 employees of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. In Decision No. 84902 regarding application No. 54281, the Commission indicated that it planned in the near future to revoke P.G.& E.'s schedules DE and G-10 which grant discounts to the Company's employees.

On behalf of Local 1245 I am requesting that, before any action with regard to those schedules is taken, a noticed hearing be held at which the Local may participate as an interested party and be given the full opportunity to present evidence regarding the proposed action and to cross-examine any person testifying in favor of eliminating the discounts. Such a hearing, and the Local's opportunity to participate in it, are required by the Due Process Clauses of the United States and California Constitutions; and the Local will take appropriate legal action, if necessary, to protect its constitutional rights.

I might also add that there are thousands of retired P.G.& E. employees, and present employees not within Local 1245's bargaining unit, whom the Local probably cannot represent. These people, I believe, must also be given an opportunity to comment on the Commission's proposed action.

I would appreciate hearing from you with regard to these matters as soon as possible, and being notified of the time and place of any hearing held by the Commission to consider elimination of P.G.& E. employee discounts.

Very truly yours,
/s/ Peter Nussbaum
Peter Nussbaum

cc: Mr. Mert Walters; Mr. Weyland Bonbright; Mr. L. V. Brown

In the meantime the CPUC scheduled a Pre-Hearing Conference for October 16, 1975 to prepare for public hearings regarding additional P.G.& E. applications (A 55509 and A 55510) for further gas and electric rate increases. At this Pre-Hearing Conference, Local Union 1245 filed an appearance as an interested party for the express purpose of opposing the elimination of employee discounts through the cancellation of Schedules DE and G-10.

After the Pre-Hearing Conference, Local 1245's Law Firm received a letter notifying them of dates set for the hearings on the rate increase case.

Notice has been given by the California Public Utilities Commission that they have set the following dates and locations for hearings of "Public Witness Testimony" at which time all interested parties may appear and be heard:

Red Bluff - Wednesday, December 3, 1975 at 7:00 p.m. in the Crystal Room, 543 South Main Street.

Stockton - Thursday, December 4, 1975 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium, West Wing, State Building, 31 East Channel Street.

Fresno - Friday, December 5, 1975 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 1036, State Building, 2550 Mariposa Street.

San Francisco - Wednesday, December 17 and Thursday, December 18, 1975 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium, State Building.

Notice has been given that any hearing can be continued or changed for good cause shown.

Our office represents International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245, AFL-CIO, which is the collective bargaining representative of some 16,000 employees of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

Very truly yours,
Peter Nussbaum

Progress toward a new office facility

A Building Acquisition Program is being submitted by the Executive Board to the Local Union membership at the November unit meetings for membership approval. Approval of the program will authorize the Executive Board and the Energy Workers Center, Inc. to contract to have a new building constructed and to sell the present office.

Briefly, the proposed building will be a 10,000 sq. ft. office building built to our specifications on a .9 acre parcel in Walnut Creek at an estimated cost of about $425,000. The proposed building site, in the Woodlands Professional Park on Citrus Circle, is near the intersection of Ygnacio Valley and Oak Grove Roads in Walnut Creek.

Continued on page two
Employee discounts under attack

(Continued from page one)

7:00 p.m. in the Commission Courtroom, State Building, 350 McAllister Street.
The next scheduled hearings are to begin on February 3, 1976 at 9:00 a.m. in the
Commission Courtroom, State Building, 350 McAllister Street, San Francisco, and
are to be concluded by June 1, 1976.

Local Union 1245 intends to use its best efforts to protect the employee
discounts for its members. The Executive Board of Local 1245 is developing a
policy statement which will be given to Local 1245 delegates to the many Central
Labor Councils in Northern California to present to those Councils asking for
their support. It is also intended to present the issue to the California State
Federation of Labor asking for their support.

This stated intent of the CPUC only directly affects Local 1245 members em-
ployed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company. However, the potential effects could
involve other Utilities and other industries regulated by the CPUC. Local 1245 will
work with other Unions who represent employees of CPUC regulated
industries asking for their support in this fight.

Local 1245 has asked for assistance from the International by providing in-
formation on other Utilities across the United States with respect to discounts and
similar moves by other State Public Utility Commissions.

Some members have written to the Local Union, the California Public Utilities
Commission, and some Local Units have submitted recommendations to the Local
on this issue. As stated above, Local Union 1245 intends to be heard and will do
its best to protect the employee discounts. However, every member, active and
retired, has an interest in this issue, whether he is employed by P.G.& E. or not.
Such members can assist in this fight; first, by attending the above-mentioned
hearings that are to be held in December and letting your feelings be known.
Second, by writing the California Public Utilities Commission and expressing your
views on the issue. Third, write your State Legislature and let him or her know how
you feel about the issue. (The State Legislature has the ultimate control over the
Commission.)

The address of the C.P.U.C. is:
California Public Utility Commission
California State Building
San Francisco, Ca. 94102

The addresses of your State Legislators are:
State Senator
State Capitol
Sacramento, Ca. 95814
Assemblyman
State Capitol
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Medical Plan Premiums Increase for 1976

The premiums for the medical plans at P.G. & E. will increase effective January
1, 1976. Blue Cross announced they will raise their premiums by 34% while Kaiser
will raise theirs 12 1/2%. However, effective January 1, 1976, Blue Cross will in-
crease the premiums by 30% with the remaining 4% to be applied at the end of
1976 depending upon the claims experience for 1976. The 4% will be paid from
funds that were built up from refunds of the old self fund plan and the Blue Shield
plan.

Local 1245 and P.G. & E. met with representatives of Blue Cross to discuss
their rate increase. Blue Cross stated that inflation and rising cost of malpractice
insurance is the reason for the high increase in premiums. Based on their analysis,
they claim that the increased cost for malpractice insurance has added $1.50 per
doctor visit, $40.00 per surgery and $30.00 per hospital stay.

As provided in the Health and Dental agreement the Company pays 80% of the
premium and the employee pays 20%. The following is a breakdown of what they
will pay effective Jan. 1, 1976.

Kaiser is proposing to insert an arbitration clause in their agreement. This
clause would provide that claims for money damages for personal injury or death
allegedly arising out of rendition or failure to render services must be submitted
to binding arbitration instead of a court trial. At present Local 1245 is opposing
this idea pending discussions with our attorneys, P.G. & E., and Kaiser.

Blue Cross

1975 1976
Employee Only 3.90 5.10
Employee and one dependent 8.20 10.70
Employee and two or more dependents 11.80 15.30

Kaiser

1975 1976
Employee Only 4.25 4.80
Employee and one dependent 8.60 9.65
Employee and two or more dependents 12.40 13.95

Convention Urges acts to spur Jobs

Action to pull the nation out of the current depression, bar the takeover
of U.D. firms by foreign multinational corporations, spur the
development of nuclear energy, and curb frivolous suits by en-
vironmentalists that halt construction projects was urged by delegates to the
AFL-CIO's 11th Constitutional Con-
vention in San Francisco this month in
the course of acting on more than 260
resolutions put before the convention.

Here is a thumbnail description of
some of the major resolutions ap-
poved by the delegates at the con-
vention:

NATIONAL ECONOMY — Stressing the point that every one per
cent rise in unemployment costs the
federal government about $16 billion
in lost tax revenue and increased social costs, the delegates warned that
there "is a real danger of another
economic downside" because of the
export of U.S. jobs.

Utility Reporter—October, 1975—Page Two
Oil Fat Cats Pad Pay Envelopes

While great minds grapple with the energy crisis, average people struggle with the problem of paying for it. The emergency belts everybody — except the big oil companies.

They’re still able to pay top bananas handsomely. Exxon’s board chairman is taking in a $667,000 salary, Mobil’s $539,000; Texaco’s $579,000; Gulf’s $344,000. These fat salaries come out of your hide directly in the gas pump and indirectly out of taxes you pay and oil companies don’t. Despite new restrictions on the depletion allowance, 18 big oil firms were still able to wriggle $800 million through tax loop-holes in fiscal 1975, according to a study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

And 1974 tax rates showed Texaco paying only 1.6 per cent, Gulf 2.9, Mobil 3.6 and Exxon 6.4 (Exxon ought to fire its lawyers and accountants). Meanwhile, the average American was paying an effective rate of at least 10 per cent.

The study, according to columnist Jack Anderson, charges that government oversight of the oil industry is so lax that the industry is free to manipulate prices. The 18 major companies control not only the oil fields, but the transmission lines, tankers, refineries and more than 90 per cent of the retail outlets, the service stations. That’s like owning the bat, the ball, the glove and the playing field, not to mention the beer concession. You play the game on their terms.

Anderson points out the oil giants milk profits from every stage of the operation from production at the wells all the way to the pumps, giving them all kinds of openings to manipulate prices. Anderson continues:

Their losses are temporary, for example, to squeeze out competitors. According to the study, the majors sometimes ‘sell gasoline to their dealers at 2 to 5 cents lower than normal’ but continue to charge the independents the regular prices. This makes it impossible for the independents to compete, and they are driven out of business. Thereafter, alleges the study, ‘the majors raise their prices.

This insidious process has reduced competition and increased oil bigness. For example, Atlantic and Richfield joined in corporate matrimony and then took over Sinclair. Standard of California reached across the country and Standard of Kentucky. Standard of Indiana gobbled up Mid-west; Continental took over Douglas; Amerada merged with Hess...
Jack McNally, Business Representative and coordinator of the two-day conference, opened the meeting with introductions. He then turned the meeting over to Senior Assistant Business Manager Mert Walters who greeted the participants on behalf of Business Manager L.L. Mitchell. He explained that Brother Mitchell was on vacation. Walters indicated that certain material and information had been put together and would be presented to them and that they in turn would have an opportunity to discuss the problems they see in the field. Brother Walters stated that the theme of the conference was "Communications" and that hopefully with the information received from the membership we can together establish goals and then work to accomplish them.

Shirley Storey, Business Representative gave a brief recap of Local 1245’s clerical activity from the beginning in 1952 to the present. She highlighted some of the gains that have been made and some of the problems we faced during this period. Sister Storey presented a challenge to those present to increase and continue our organizing efforts.

The conference then broke into three workshops which provided a good cross-section of members from different divisions of PG & E. They were to discuss the current problems they were experiencing on a day-to-day basis in their respective offices.

After lunch Bob Salazar, Clerk B-San Francisco Division; Kathy Hill, Clerk C-San Jose Division; and Wilma Cook, Clerk B-San Joaquin each gave a report to the Conference on their respective work shops.

Assistant Business Manager Larry Foss gave a report on the latest significant grievances and arbitration cases that involved the Clerical Unit of PG & E. He reported on the discontinuance of per-diem for machine operators who worked the night shift in General Office. Through arbitration the Union won back the per-diem even though it was not specifically contained in the agreement. The real victory was in maintaining the "savings clause" which protected the per-diem even though it was instituted after the first agreement was made in 1953.

Brother Foss reported on a recent grievance where the company unilaterally reduced the mileage allowance and the Union was able to stop it because of the "savings clause."

He also reported on the most recent arbitration case that now permits an employee to use sick leave for termination of pregnancy. He pointed out that the Civil Rights Act and recent court cases affected the decision on this case.

The last speaker on Saturday was Bill Aussieker, Professor, School of Administration, California State College, San Bernadino. Mr. Aussieker was hired by Local 1245 back in 1972 as an expert on job evaluation to assist Local 1245 in evaluation and negotiations on the PG & E job evaluation plan. He addressed the conference on job evaluation and explained what job evaluation is and how it works. A long question and answer period followed.

On Sunday, the second and final day of the conference, Business Representative Jack Hill, Job Grading Committee members Lloyd Medlin and Ed Vallejo explained the Cross-Hatch Grading System used by PG & E and how it fits into the grievance procedure. It was pointed out that prior to 1973 the Union was not involved in grading with PG & E. As a result of 1973 general negotiations, the Union now has some say in job grading. The current agreement provides a procedure to resolve disputes over the grading of jobs. A demonstration on how a job is graded was presented to the conference participants.

Sr. Asst. Bus. Mgr. Mert Walters explained the Clerical Hours Clarification. He reported that the new agreement came about as a result of Ad Hoc Negotiations in order to resolve previously unsolved grievances.

The conference was then opened up to general discussion by Business Representative Jack McNally. Many questions revolved around the shuffling of clerical duties by PG & E which resulted in no upgrades and red circling of jobs. It was pointed out to the delegates that in order for the system of job grading to work, it is very important that the job assignment questionnaire be filled out completely, fully explaining all the duties performed. It was also pointed out that in order for the grievance procedure involving job grading to work, stewards and members should be on the alert for any changes in clerical duties. If there are any changes in duties, shuffling of duties, or if the member has questions about the duties he or she is performing, it should be raised with a shop steward so that proper action can be taken if warranted.

The participants were of the opinion that the conference was educational and could act as the vehicle for renewed interest in the clerical group.
Kathy Hill, shop steward from the San Jose Division, is shown reporting on her workshop.

Sr. Asst. Bus. Mgr. Mert Walters is shown greeting the conference participants.

Professor Bill Aussieker is shown explaining job evaluation and demonstrating how it works.

Wilma Cook, Shop Steward from Bakersfield, is shown making a workshop report.

Asst. Bus. Mgr. Larry Foss is shown reporting on recent arbitration cases affecting clerical employees.

Bob Salazar, Shop Steward in San Francisco, is shown reporting workshop results.

The balance of the Clerical Conference delegates are shown in this photo.
Oil Fat Cats
Pad Pay Envelopes

(Continued from page three)

"The Big 18 showed 'an increasing trend toward anti-competitive cooperation and collusion,' charges the report. This is denied by oil spokesmen. But the way it is done, according to the report, is through interlocking directorships. Wherever tycoons gather to discuss common interests, oil directors usually can be found.

"Declares the study. 'The major oil companies are linked 131 times with U.S. banks. At least one oil company director sits on the boards of each of the eleven largest U.S. banks...

"It takes little imagination to see who gains favor, who is an oil company director. Another chart shows the wide network of interlocking directorships, including those of the largest U.S. banks.'

"The influence of oil, with a potential for sky-is-the-limit pricing, is found everywhere. In the transportation industry, for example, 'there are interlocking oil directorships with major transportation companies, most railroads and airlines,' states the study.

"The oil companies also help to dictate the decisions affecting other forms of energy. Exxon, Gulf, Continental and Standard of Ohio have substantial coal holdings. Geothermal energy is dominated by Union, with Gulf, Shell, Sun and Standard of California moving into the field. Exxon, Getty and Gulf are powers in nuclear energy, and even solar energy is coming under the control of (oil firms).

"Governments may rise and fall; wars may shake the world. But the dividends keep pouring in, remarkably unaffected by international boundaries and politics. For years, Exxon, Mobil, Texaco and Standard of California, for example, control the world's largest oil reserve in Saudia Arabia. When their profits were on the line, they didn't hesitate to ignore the direction of the U.S. government and follow the dictates instead of the Arab oil governments.'

Labor and the Press

A newspaper publisher is nothing more than a businessman whose business happens to be publishing a newspaper. There is nothing wrong in that, but somehow it seems to embarrass publishers and editors.

For some reason, they try to hide this fact with a cloak of newsprint. Admitting their natural and inherent prejudice as businessmen would, in my opinion, lend little prestige to their profession. As their competition, I provide the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations. From such a lofty perch, they proclaim the commandments of labor relations.

"From the Liebling Memorial Lecture delivered by AFL-CIO Sec.-Treas. Lane Kirkland at the ILPA Convention."
Simone Blames Poor For Being Poor

Treasury Secretary William Simon made a deliberate misstatement recently when he called the food stamp program "A well-known haven for chiselers and rip-off artists." He also is true that there have been substantial increases in food stamp costs, but these are not the result of chiseling. There was a direct consequence of recession, high unemployment and continuing food price inflation, in short, the Nixon-Simon-Ford economic policy is to blame. A review of the food stamp program could be useful if it were based on facts. Instead the Ford Administration has made food stamps part of internal Republican politics. Moving to the right to Reagans Reagan, the White House apparently has decided that sacrificing food stamps may dampen the incipient revolt from the supporters of the former California governor. Now executive branch officials have joined those who slam that program and subverting the food stamp program.

The Administration has blamed recent food stamp increases on fraud rather than the failure of economic policies. Yet the Administration itself has admitted consistently that food stamp fraud is nearly non-existent. In June 1973, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeuther testified that the Food Stamp Program has been "remarkably free from fraud.

The percentage of fraud in the participating households . . . equalled 24/1000th of one per cent.

A different but related charge is that taxpayers are footing the bill for food stamps for high income families. One advertisement in a national magazine was headlined: "Taxpayers Making Up to $16,000 A Year Now Eligible." Though the Federal Trade Commission is pursuing charges of false advertising, the false impressions created by the ad persist, the truth, however, is that 77 percent of food stamp recipients have incomes after taxes below $5,000 a year; 92 percent are below $7,000; virtually all earn less than $10,000. In fact, the food stamp program continues to be what it is supposed to be: a low-income program to feed those who otherwise cannot afford to feed themselves and their families.

Of course the best solution to the increasing costs of food stamps, as to many of our national problems, is the restoration of our national economy. For every one percent increase in unemployment, an additional 600,000 Americans are forced to turn to food stamps. The food stamp budget will continue to rise unless the economy offers sufficient jobs for all who can work at decent wages which are not constantly devoured by inflation. Yet the Administration which created unprecedented unemployment now complains because the unemployed need food stamps to feed their families. Secretary Simon's irresponsible and inflammatory remarks about "food stamp chiselers and rip-off artists" are simply untrue, and he did not offer a single statistic to support his statements. He cannot defend his charges because they are false. He is a liar and he knows it.

Service Union Reporter

City of Santa Clara Honors Local 1245 Unit Chairman Howard E. "Pete" Peterson

The City Council of the City of Santa Clara passed a resolution establishing the week of November 9 through November 15, 1975 as "Howard E. Peterson Week" in recognition of his book written by "Pete" entitled "STAND SILENT". In his book, "STAND SILENT", Pete has traced the history of our country's Congressional Medal of Honor from its inception to the present. His book contains a wealth of knowledge and information surrounding the men who have earned this prestigious honor at the risk of their lives "above and beyond the call of duty." In researching his book, Pete spent his vacation time over the past years traveling throughout this great land of ours visiting the areas where the early Congressional Medal of Honor winners deeds and accomplishments became a part of our American Heritage.

The detail, color and preciseness of the material and information Pete has captured in his book, "STAND SILENT" is not a surprise to our members employed by the City of Santa Clara, as he demonstrates the same qualities in his job as Lineman Truck Driver for the City and his activities in behalf of Local 1245 members as Unit Chairman and member of Local 1245's City of Santa Clara negotiating committee. 

Editor's Note: I am sure all the officers and members of Local 1245 join me in congratulating "Pete" for his excellent book, STAND SILENT as well as expressing our pride in his efforts representing members of Local 1245.

How Losers Can Be Winners (Continued from page 3)

In another example, a partnership set up to build and operate a store began with a total investment of $35,000 and borrowed nearly all of the money needed. The first year's operations produced a $203,000 net profit. The detail, color and preciseness of the material and information Pete has captured in his book, "STAND SILENT" is not a surprise to our members employed by the City of Santa Clara, as he demonstrates the same qualities in his job as Lineman Truck Driver for the City and his activities in behalf of Local 1245 members as Unit Chairman and member of Local 1245's City of Santa Clara negotiating committee. 

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more and more common among children under five.

"We call it 'The Sunday-morning Syndrome' because children often get up early on Sunday morning, before their parents are awake, and discover bottles and unfinished drinks left over from a Saturday-night party.

"It doesn't take much alcohol to kill a child. Even several ounces can depress the nervous system or drop the blood-sugar level low enough for death to occur.

"And there is no antidote nothing you can do to increase the metabolism or breakdown of alcohol in the body. That's why it's so dangerous.

The ability to metabolize alcohol is directly related to body weight. The more you weigh, the more you can drink without experiencing side effects. "But when it comes to young children," Dr. Moriarty points out, "You're dealing with a very small package."

As for The Sunday-morning Syndrome, he adds: "A child has nothing in his stomach when he first gets out of bed, so the rate of absorption is further increased."

Empty the drinks

Precautions: Before going to bed after a party, empty all glasses and place liquor bottles out of the reach of children.

If, despite your precautions, your child swallows alcohol, immediately telephone your local poison center, physician or hospital emergency room. Give details and follow instructions.

Do not induce vomiting unless you're told to. If it's a severe case and your child is brought to a poison center or hospital emergency room, the alcohol may be removed from the bloodstream by dialysis — a procedure similar to that of an artificial kidney machine.

A sobering footnote for parents with children over five: keep your guard up. According to Dr. Moriarty, "Alcohol is already the number-one drug of abuse among adolescents between the ages of 10 and 16."

Family Safety

The other hazard hung over from a party is fire — caused by cigarettes or their embers smoldering in sofas and chairs after you've gone to bed.

A party increases the danger of fire, according to Rexford Wilson, president of Firepro Incorporated, a technical consulting center for fire protection. His reasons:

"People are less alert. Alcohol dulls the senses. Fire consumes oxygen, creating carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, which further dulls the senses. Alcohol, moreover, increases your susceptibility to CO and CO2."

Wilson points out that party-goers are often careless while smoking. They may jar a cigarette off an ashtray, or they may bump into each other, knocking ashes and burning coals onto sofas and easy chairs. If those incendiaries fall on a rug or carpet, you might smell smoke fairly soon. But if they drop into upholstery, it might take 40 minutes or more to smell danger.

According to Wilson, "Most fires that cause multiple deaths in the home occur during the sleeping hours — 10 p.m. to 6 a.m." During those hours, he says, you and your family are highly vulnerable because "fire gets a foothold before anyone awakens. Then time for escape is short — sometimes too short!"

Empty the ashtrays

Precautions: Before a party, provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays. If wastebaskets are in the area, remove them; they are a target of opportunity for a smoker.

After a party, remove cushions from furniture and feel around for cigarettes and ashes with your hands. Hundreds of fatal fires begin in chairs and sofas.

Finally, gather up all ashtrays, making sure nothing falls out — and place them in the kitchen sink. (You can indulge yourself by waiting until morning to empty them.)

In the fire and alcohol precautions next time you have a party, you'll have a ball!