

ACCION

Published once a month by Local 713,
United Public Workers, C. I. O.

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EDITORIA PANAMA AMERICA, JULIO DE 1947

THE STRENGTH THAT IS OURS

— A. M. PARCHMENT —

It took us forty years to found a powerful trade union but it would be a tragedy of a forty-year cycle if we await the passing of another lengthy period before we become fully conscious of the strength that is ours.

The tap root of Local 713 is imbedded deeply in a membership of 15,000 workers of the Canal Zone. Supporting our vigorous tap root are many active laterals that burrow into the fertile soil of approval by the Panamanian government, spirited backing by the International Union, and aroused interest of numerous democratic organizations throughout the world.

Our membership of 15,000 workers anchors our Local so that we can weather the storms and upheavals to which we have become heirs because of our determined fight to enjoy the good things of life. A strong membership buoys up the courage of the timid, commands the respect of our enemies, wins to our cause a host of defenders, and infuses new spirit in the rank and file. However, not until we can truthfully boast of a one hundred per cent membership will we be able to direct an irresistible force on the obtaining of our objectives.

When we fearfully made our debut on July 4, 1946, at the National Gymnasium, President Jimenez gave our infant organization a shot in the arm by attending our mass meeting in the company of his entire cabinet. This gesture on the part of the Chief Executive of Panama had an electrifying effect on our membership drive, for within a couple of weeks our enrollment soared from 4,000 to 12,000. We still enjoy the goodwill and support of the Panamanian government — a source of strength that should be protected by Local 713.

Today we are no longer babes in the woods wandering aimlessly without protection. The halls of the Congress of the United States are echoing with the stirring pleas of our International representatives who are waging an all-out campaign in our behalf. We are represented at committee hearings in Washington and the vile, chauvinistic charges of our enemies are now promptly refuted. Our representation in Congress is of the highest and most effective standard but on us rests the responsibility of supplying the fuel for the powerful machinery of representation in the Capital. That fuel is the adequate dues remittances which will condition the effectiveness of the fight. A strong membership promotes effective representation.

Two years ago the plight of the "silver" workers of the Canal Zone did not create a ripple in the United States. The average American citizen was concerned only with the fact that the Panama Canal was functioning for the benefit of world commerce. Today the average American citizen is asking questions concerning the army of "silver" workers who built the waterway and are now assisting in the efficient maintenance of this vital American investment. The queries of the average American have impelled "Time" magazine to comment on the deplorable conditions here. In brief, the lamentations of 40 years have reached the ears of millions of Americans and have been magnified into a thunderous rumble that has awakened the conscience of a nation founded on the principle of fair treatment to all.

We are moving — but our pace is governed by our membership. Maximum enrollment insures a fast approach to our goals. Let our slogan be: "Organize the un-organized!"

PRESIDENT FLAXER SENDS GREETINGS

Editor of Accion, Local 713,
United Public Workers, Draw-
er R. Balboa:

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you my warmest greetings and sincere congratulations on the occasion of the first anniversary of the publication of the newspaper, Accion. Accion has taken its place in the growing company of labor newspapers today. More than ever before, labor's own newspapers are needed to present unbiased, accurate and true information about people who work for a living, which

cannot be found in the commercial press. The labor press also has a tremendous responsibility in these critical times to help educate the members, and to keep them united in a program of action for the improvement of their conditions. Local 713's newspaper, Accion, has an especially important task. I am confident that it will continue to play a vital role in helping to organize a more powerful union and an informed and enlightened membership. With best wishes.

Abram Flaxer, President

"GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SINCERELY INTERESTED"—Strobel

Brodsky Meets Navy Employees

On Tuesday July 1st the employees of the United States Navy held their monthly Job-Location Meeting at the International Hall, Colon. Those attending numbered about 150 in spite of the inclemency of the weather. Brother G. M. Ogle, Secretary of the Cristobal Chapter introduced the new Regional Director Brother Max Brodsky, after which a Chairman and Secretary were elected.

Brother Brodsky made an interesting address on being presented. He spoke forcefully of the membership drive now being started, advising members employed by the Navy to be active in it, as their problems, though different to those of the general membership, still needed representation along organized methods. He spoke about a Grievance taken to the third stage on the established Naval Grievance Procedure at Coco Solo only the day before, and every consideration was accorded Union representatives, also the aggrieved party. He ended his discourse with the statement that only by pushing the Union's drive for 100% membership and succeeding in the effort, will full returns be obtained on their demands. A complaint of general interest to all employees of the Naval Station was submitted. This referred to the hardship experienced during the rainy season by those who were forced to make use of busses to get to and from work. The It was decided to make the necessary representations to the Naval authorities. Brother Cecil R. Joseph was elected Chairman and Bro. Goldbourne Lewis, Secretary. Under communications a letter was read from the Naval Authorities in reply to International Vice President Strobel's correspondence dealing with the 5% deduction from the pay of employees of the Navy towards retirement pay. The reply outlined the method employed for the refund of such deductions after Reduction in Force. Other correspondence bore reference to regulations of interest to employees of the Navy, and circulars of the same nature were also submitted.

Reference was made to the practice of posting flysheets on Government buildings. Brother Ogle said that employees of the Navy were warned specifically against such infraction of the regulations on penalty of dismissal.

After the regular business of the meeting was concluded Pictures were shown and all present rated the proceedings as highly successful.

Local 713 UPW-CIO is launching a determined membership drive for a one hundred per cent union.

Support the drive workers! Convince everybody that you mean business

Our slogan is "100% MEMBERSHIP BY NEXT CONVENTION!"

COLON, July 13—In a stirring speech broadcast from Radio Atlantico in the city of Colon, Jacob L. Strobel, International Vice-President of United Public Workers, CIO said farewell to the thousands of "silver" workers on the Canal Zone who have grown to admire him so much. Jack, as he is commonly called by his co-workers, has spent nine short months working with the Local 713 and despite the mountainous difficulties he encountered, has fully convinced the general membership of his fine leadership and outstanding ability as a negotiator.

Following is the text of the farewell speech:

"I want to take this opportunity of saying good-bye to the members of Local 713 of the United Public Workers of America, CIO. I have spent nine months living here and working throughout the Isthmus and the Canal Zone on behalf of Local 713, the CIO Union of the long-suffering "Silver" workers. Although it goes without saying that my family and I are a little homesick and will be glad to get back to our family and friends in the States, nevertheless I want to say very sincerely that it has not only been a great pleasure to work here, but more than that I believe it has been perhaps the most profound experience of my life in the labor movement.

As an American, I have felt very deeply that the American people owe a real debt to the "Silver" workers whose skill and brawn and loyalty have made possible this great Panama Canal which is one of the wonders of the world and which has been of enormous economic and military benefit to my country. I have also felt very deeply that the American people have not adequately paid this great debt which they owe to the "Silver" workers, and it has been a source of great personal satisfaction to me that my Union has been able to make some slight improvement in the working conditions and social conditions of my Union brothers and sisters among the "Silver" workers.

When I return to Washington, D.C., next Thursday, I will be leaving the "Silver" workers but I will not forget them, and I pledge to do everything in my power to continue in the States the work that I have begun here in the fight to bring a better life to the "Silver" workers.

Our Union's first year's experience has demonstrated beyond any doubt the great value of the CIO in improving the wages and working conditions of its members. Only a beginning has been made and we have actually only scratched the surface, but I am convinced that the future will bring additional gains to the "Silver" workers as has happened during the past year, provided the Union here is maintained as a powerful and fighting organization. This will not only benefit the "Silver" workers themselves but will help all of the people of the Republic of Panama as well

indirectly. The best advice that I can give to both the "Silver" workers and the people of the Republic in general is — don't let go of your Union. Keep it strong and keep up the good fight for economic, social and racial equality.

I wish to express my appreciation to President Jimenez, to Governor Navas, and to all of the many officials and employees of the government of the Republic of Panama for all the good that they have done for us as a Union organization, and for the friendship and courtesy which they have shown me in my personal dealings with them. I know that the six million members of the CIO back home in the States will be glad to know that they have such good friends in the government of this Republic.

I decide further to pay my respects to Governor Mehaffey, Governor of the Panama Canal, to Colonel Wang, Assistant to the Governor, to Admiral Shafroth and Chief of Staff Spencer of the Navy, and to General Porter, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Army. These officials as well as many supervisors, department heads, and other subordinate officials have given us a great deal of their time, have listened with sympathy to our complaints and have taken action to improve working conditions and wages whenever we were able to present a logical and provable argument. This has been particularly true in the field of working conditions, considerably less so in the field of wages. However, we believe that the various Government officials in the Canal Zone are sincerely interested in doing something within the limits of their authority on the wage problem.

I have made many deep and lasting friendships here among the officers, Executive Board members, stewards, and rank and file members of our Union. We have not only worked together, we have also had good times together and have formed warm and lasting friendships which I know will endure for a long time. I am looking forward to the day next year when local 713 will send its own delegates from Panama and the Canal Zone to the United States to attend the International Convention of our Union in order to renew once again some of the friendships I have made here, and in my turn to play host to people who were good hosts to me here in Panama.

To all of you, I say, Good-bye, good luck, and God bless you.

You can't afford

To stay out —

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