

Official Organ
of
Local 713
UPW-CIO

Non-political



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UNION PAPER

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FREE

(AN EDITORIAL)

A SUBSTANTIAL RAISE NOW

For some time now, the "silver" employees on the Canal Zone have been looking forward to a substantial wage increase. The changed conditions over the last seven years have caused an upward trend in wages all over the United States. Even the oft-forgotten government employees have been given increases in wages to cope with the rising cost of living. Here on the Canal Zone, certain government employees were given substantial increases in wages, an 18% increase at one time and a 22% increase at another time.

The "silver" employees were not given these general substantial increases. They were given small increases, but the percent of increases were much less than the percentage of rise in the cost of living.

In the month of February, Local 713, UPW-CIO submitted to the Governor a Brief in which they proposed wage increases for "silver" workers. The facts presented showed that between the years of 1940 and 1946, the cost of living for the "silver" workers had gone up 50%, while the monthly average take-home pay of the same employees rose only 31%. This meant that the "silver" employees were taking a cut in real wages.

The Panama Canal announced that certain food items made up the major portion of the "silver" worker's diet. The prices of these items were controlled, they said. By comparison of the 1940 and the 1947 prices of these controlled items, it was shown that the prices had risen over 94%!

It is reasonable to assume that the overall average cost of living of the "silver" worker rose much more than the 50% originally estimated. The Brief

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Reinstatement Won In Maternity Cases

MORE GAINS.....

Recent Gains won by Local 713 in grievances processed include the case of Sister Elena Cañate, I C No. 137566, employed at the at Mount Hope, discharged whilst Bakery, Commissary Department on Maternity Leave.

Sister Cañate went on Maternity Leave for three months commencing June 30th last, to return to work September 30th. On July 31st notice was served on her to the effect that she would be given "Reduction of Force" effective September 30th.

The case was handled through the first and second stages with unsatisfactory results. At the third, Sister Cañate was ordered re-instated. She was represented by Organizer Garcia, associated with International Representative T. M. Nolan.

Sister Clementina Fernandez De La E, I C No. 218074, also an employee of the Bakery, suffered "Reduction of Force" for similar reasons. She was granted three months Maternity Leave from March 30th to report back to work on June 28th. During the month of June, and prior to the expiration of her leave, she forwarded a message to the proper source stating that she was still

sick.

On July 28th she reported for duty, tendering a medical certificate covering her time between April 28th and July 28th. She was instructed to return August 1st. Complying, she was presented on August 1st. with a Clearance, showing "Pregnancy" as the cause of dismissal, Workmanship 'Good' Conduct 'Good'. Period of Employment April 23rd 1944 to April 15th 1947. The decision in this case was also "Reinstatement."

During the hearing it came out in the evidence, that the stand taken to support "Reduction of Force" and "Dismissal" was based on the fact that between the date of issuance of the Governor's Circular on the granting of Maternity Leave, and the receipt by the Commissary Department of final information clarifying its terms, the cases in question developed; hence it was the opinion of the authorities that the persons affected were not protected by the Circular.

The decision in this case was again "Re-instatement". Union officials representing the aggrieved parties were Organizer Garcia and T. M. Nolan. Both grievances were dealt with at the same hearing.

Less Hospital Deductions Authorized

A request was made by the Union that hospital fees to be deducted from an employee's salary should not be more than 20% of the employee's take-home pay. In the past, deductions that were large in relation to the employee's salary created a serious financial strain on the employee affected.

Mr. Wang, Assistant to the Governor of the Panama Canal, informed the Union that cases which merited special considerations could, be handled justifiably by the government.

Said Mr. Wang:
"I am glad to inform you.... that whenever there are special

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Union To Celebrate Labor Day

Labor Day will be celebrated by Local 713 with special radio broadcasts, dances, and playing of games by Chapter teams.

Pacific Side members will flock to the Paraiso Playground for the spirited contests scheduled in cricket, softball, tennis, volley ball, and ping pong. Dancing from 4 P.M. to midnight will conclude the day's activities. The Rhythm Masters of Panama City will provide the music.

The Atlantic Side activities will be held at the Gatun Gymnasium where games, and dancing will be provided for the members and their friends.

APPROPRIATION RIDER DEFEATED

Through the terms of the 1936 Treaty between the Republic of Panama and the United States, Panamanian citizens were eligible to equal opportunity with American citizens for employment on the Canal Zone. In observance of this, the Civil Service Commission recently opened examinations to citizens of the Republic. The Governor of the Panama Canal endorsed this provision unqualifiedly. Representatives of the Canal Zone AFL Unions at Washington vigorously attacked this measure, mainly on the grounds that the safety of the Canal in relationship to National and Hemispheric defense would be jeopardized. They also claimed among other things that nationals of foreign countries could easily secure Panamanian citizenship by outright purchase, take these examinations and so infiltrate into key positions which would place them in a position to seriously hamper national defense in case of war. In this they were supported by representatives of the American Legion and veteran organizations in testimony before various Committees of Congress. The UPW-CIO supported the position taken by the Governor of the Panama Canal, the State Department, the Department of Justice and the Civil Service Commission in direct opposition to the AFL.

THE RIDER:

The AFL Unions resorted to questionable Legislative devices

seeing that orthodox methods had failed. A La McCarran Amendment they got a Rider tacked on to the War Department Civil Functions Appropriations Bill, to the effect that none of the money so appropriated was to be used to pay Panamanian citizens who had qualified for employment through Civil Service Examinations.

Supporters of the Rider were defeated in the House where the Bill was passed without the Rider. In the Senate they were more successful. The Rider was included in the Bill's passage. The matter had then to be taken up by a joint Congressional Committee of Congress preparatory to a vote by House and Senate before presentation for the President's signature to become Law.

CIO GOES INTO HIGH GEAR

Legislative Representatives of the UPW-CIO in Washington, working as a team, quickly got into touch with the State Department, the Panama Canal Office and the Panamanian Legation. The Representatives of the International Union assigned here to Local 713 was directed by the Washington Office to contact the Foreign Minister of the Republic. Representatives of many groups converged on the conferees in an eleventh hour effort to save the situation. Knowing from experience that in rushing through necessary Legislation immediately prior to adjournment Legislators are likely to merely skim reports and statements, the attention of the conferees was drawn to significant factors relating to Treaty relations, Employees' morale and Administrative embarrassments. The result was the passage of the Bill with "Rider" eliminated.

Undoubtedly the dropping of the "Rider" was a clear victory for the CIO and a definite defeat for the AFL Unions on the Canal Zone.

AUGUST 13, BRINGS LUCK TO AUSTIN GITTENS

There is one man who cannot be convinced that the number 13 is unlucky. That man is Austin N. Gittens, IC-22029.

Mr. Gittens, a long time employee of the M.E. Division, was recently separated through Reduction Of Force.

Organizer Joseph Millwood who negotiated the case obtained for him, with the much appreciated cooperation of Management, a cancellation of the order.

On August 13, Mr. Gittens was back at his old job and punching his old card.

You can't afford
To stay out —
Join Today!

FLASH! Union Organizers May Now Represent Members In The Second Stage Of Grievance Procedure!

According to information received at Union Headquarters, it is now permissible for Union organizers to represent members in the second stage of a grievance.

In a recent circular (Circular G-341-Amendment No. 1) dated August 20, Circular G-341 was amended to permit the new arrangement.

For the benefit of all members we print the following excerpt:

"b. SECOND STAGE: If an adjustment satisfactory to the employee is not reached at the first stage, the employee's immediate supervisor or foreman will arrange promptly for a meeting with the supervisor in charge of the office, shop or unot concerned. The employee must be present in person and may be accompanied by A REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS CHOICE, EITHER A FELLOW EMPLOYEE OR ANOTHER. A decision must be rendered promptly and in any event within three working days.

By Direction of the Governor:

F. H. WANG
Executive Secretary."