

## EDITORIAL

The visit of Local 713 delegates to the United States opens up stirring new vistas and horizons for the "silver" workers. These people more than ever now have the ear of U. S. Citizens and the Congress.

The trip of the delegates is in every sense an epoch-making occurrence in the bitter struggle of the "silver" employees for a better way of life. It is a milestone on the rocky path of suffering and frustration.

Everywhere people gasped and shook their heads in wonderment when they heard from the lips of Ampudia, Alexis, Bournes, Lewis and Green of the incredible degree of discrimination. Who would believe that an employee with over 40 years' service, one who helped dig the canal, was rewarded for his labor with a pathetic \$25 monthly pension? U. S. citizens hung their heads in shame when they heard of a 22c per hour minimum wage of the Canal Zone.

"Can this be the United States government" they asked, amazed. "Do you mean to tell me that our government not only condones these conditions — but enforces them."

Such were the questions coming from the audiences that listened in amazement and shame everywhere the delegates went.

There was no need to exaggerate. It was only necessary to tell of conditions as they actually existed to win the overwhelming sympathy and support of people from all walks of life.

The 550 delegates attending the UPW convention went home with this tale burning in their ears and with a hard-spoken resolve to spread the story far and wide and mobilize support for their brothers and sisters in the Zone.

A committee of outstanding Negro and white leaders, including Paul Robenson and Abel Plenn, author of "Wind in the Olive Trees," has already been formed to put the spotlight on the "cancer in the Zone."

Not even the nine Congressmen who listened to the delegates had known fully of the true conditions on the Zone. Of course other Congressmen had visited the Canal Zone on many occasions but the plight of the so-called "silver" employee was not publicized by them.

The Congressmen plied the delegates with numerous questions. They learned of the "silver" wage scales and then were astonished to learn that "silver" employees paid the same prices in government commissaries. "How do you manage to survive," they asked. No one could answer.

The nine Congressmen pledged their complete support to Local 713's program and outlined their plans to attack the problem. At last the "silver" employees will have an effective voice in Congress.

Whether it was Harold Ickes, newspaper reporters, or just union members, the story was the same. The same astonishment, the same sense of shame and the same determination to put their shoulder to the wheel.

Today the United States no longer think of "silver" employees as workers in a "silver" mine. They see them as the cast-offs and derelicts of an ungrateful government, still unswerving in their loyalty to their creation — The Panama Canal. The tears of shame are now being converted to words and action. The "silver" workers can rest assured that they have powerful friends and mighty voices in the United States. The Iron Curtain on the "silver" side of the Zone has been lifted and the sight was not beautiful to see.

## NEWCOMER HAILS LOYALTY OF "SILVER" EMPLOYEES

Brig. Gen. Francis K. Newcomer,  
Governor, The Panama Canal,  
Balboa Heights, C. Z.

Dear Governor Newcomer:

With a feeling of gratification over a "flash" received by radio from the United States today, to the effect that the Senate definitely confirmed your appointment as the new governor of the Panama Canal, we hasten therefore to extend our warmest felicitations and best wishes on this happy occasion.

In addition may we assure you of the continued loyalty of the officers of Local 713, UPW-CIO and the mass of silver employees in general, who with unremitting zeal shall support your administration as Governor of the Panama Canal.

Very respectfully yours,

LEROY INNISS,

Acting Recording & Corresponding Secretary.

Mr. Leroy Inniss,  
Actg. Recording & Corresponding Secretary,  
United Public Workers of America, Local No. 713,  
Drawer I, Cristobal, C. Z.

My dear Mr. Inniss:

Your very kind message of congratulations has been received and I wish to express my appreciation to you and the members of Local 713, UPW-CIO.

It has been my observation and conviction, as well as my predecessor's, that the mass of the silver employees are completely loyal and your assurance of their continued support of my administration is very gratifying. It will be my purpose to give the fullest consideration to all matters that affect the welfare of the employees and I am confidently anticipating reciprocal cooperation in matters affecting the efficient operation of The Panama Canal and Railroad.

Sincerely,

F. K. NEWCOMER,  
Governor.

## Local 713 . . .

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Convention delegates were shocked to hear that the minimum wage was only 22c on the Canal Zone and that there was no decent retirement system for the old and faithful employees. Deep concern was shown by the convention over the low wages generally paid the so-called "silver" employees and the fact that no provisions had been made for a general across-the-board increase.

Local 713 submitted ten resolutions calling for a 40c minimum wage, enforcement of the recommendations of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, improvements in the present classification system, establishment of a Juvenile Court, the setting up of a decent retirement system, improvement in housing conditions, equal job opportunities, provisions for better recreational facilities, the granting of a general wage increase for all employees to cover the increased cost of living, and elimination of tuition charges for employees living outside the Canal Zone. In adopting the resolutions the Convention called upon the President of the United States, members of Congress and the Canal Zone authorities to alleviate the conditions cited and called upon the International Union officers to do everything in their power to seek an early solution to these problems.

The considerable time spent by the Convention in discussing the Local 713 resolutions indicated the sincere interest in the problems of the so-called "silver" workers by the delegates and their desire to assist in every way possible in achieving the proposals set forth in the resolutions. The Local 713 delegation expressed complete satisfaction with the manner in which the resolutions were presented to the Convention and were pleased that considerable Convention time had been taken to discuss them fully.

## Shocked . . .

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Jim Crow conditions faced by the so-called "silver" workers on the Panama Canal Zone are as bad as the discrimination faced by the Negro in Mississippi."

Congressman Powell told the delegation that he intended to visit the Panama Canal Zone in the not too far distant future to make a further study of the discriminatory conditions. In the meanwhile, he had the other Congressmen promise to take every possible step to improve the conditions of these employees of the U. S. government.

## ACCION

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## TODAYS TRENDS

By FOSTER BOURNES

We recommend Convention time to all who seek an unabridged version of the deeper meaning of the labor struggle in the United States today. The drama, the tragedy and pathos, and the comedy of it, are on display for all to see. For these people who represent a true cross-section of America have not travelled thousands of miles for sport; they are playing for keeps and the stakes are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". They have come from inland and coastal states covering the length and breadth of these United States.

Here seated at a centre table is a delegation from Mississippi, the Bilbo State, and over there two tables away is a group from Minnesota, familiarly known as the Iron Range. Way up front is representation from the sun-kissed shores of California, while off to the left is speed-conscious super-mechanised New York. And from outside too. Panama's delegation travelled 5,000 miles while Hawaii's lone representative covered a distance of 6,000 miles.

## A WORKINGMAN'S DEMOCRACY

The racial minorities are well represented here. This concourse of delegates is a mixture of races, religions and political beliefs. They have many kindred virtues but one thing principally. They are fighting mad. Yes, they are mad at Taft-Hartley; incoherent with rage at the Mundt bill; hurling hell and damnation at the Keefe rider. They vow as one, friend and foe alike, to fight every piece of repressive legislation emanating from the halls of Congress.

Here again is exemplified the true American spirit which nixed the nazis at Normandy, and annihilated the Nips at Nagasaki. This is that breed of fighting men and women that has always refused to even contemplate defeat.

They laugh a little, and play a little, but underneath it all the grim life and death struggle runs like warp weaving through the woof. They will have no truck with racial discrimination and segregation, nor will they cater to the exploitation of minorities. They stand up and speak their minds out for a democratic America.

## GOOD NEIGHBORS ALL

Here friendship between the races in genuine and uninhibited, as the struggle of white and black interweave. The need and the hope of a better world is no dream here, but a searing and surging reality. Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongolid are working side by side with the same eagerness and enthusiasm to develop workable norms for a real progressive social system.

This is Convention time; School teachers, sanitation workers, salaried white collar employees, common laborers, waitresses, cooks, truck drivers, chemists, librarians, stenographers, all mingle freely to discuss the problems of the day. They plan and work together and from their combined efforts evolve policy and program to direct the destinies of UPW-CIO for the next two years. It is amazing — the capacities and capabilities displayed by the trade unionists.

In four days of Convention time a tremendous volume of work has been completed and they emerge tired but happy. They disperse as they came inauspiciously, for all parts of the United States to tell and retell the strange tales they had heard. Like missionaries crusading for the democratic ideal, they will try to find the answer to Hawaii's question. (He was known as "Hawaii" because no one could remember his name). In committee he asked: "Do you mean to say that in Canal Zone black men gets less pay for same work?" That "Why" hung in the air unanswered.

## Local 713 Bids Mehaffey Farewell

General Joseph C. Mehaffey,  
c/o Colonel Frank H. Wang,

Executive Secretary

The Panama Canal,

Balboa Heights, C. Z.

Dear General Mehaffey:

The completion of your service as Governor of the Panama Canal is to the many silver employees and especially to the officers and members of Local 713, UPW-CIO a very regrettable incident to be recorded in the annals of our negotiations with the Government of the Panama Canal, particularly under your most remarkable administration.

Indeed, we are greatly disadvantaged through the lack of adequate words to convey our sincere feelings to you at this time when our parting is inevitable. We are, however, confident that you are fully aware of our gratefulness for the keen interest you have always taken in matters of extreme concern to the silver employees and for this unselfish and sincere attitude we are greatly indebted to you, and say with all our heart thank you and may your life be spared to enjoy the fruits resulting from your many humanitarian actions to a humble group of unfortunate people.

In conclusion it our fond hope that you new assignment will be crowned with an abundance of success coupled with good health and happiness.

Very sincerely yours,

LEROY INNISS,

Actg. Recording & Corresponding Secretary.