

Delegates . . .

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assistants, the Local 713 delegation and Brother Tommy Richardson.

During the Conference the delegation was given full particulars on the methods to be used in setting up these credit unions and obtaining of the charters under the supervision of the Federal Government. The delegation was also advised of the preliminary steps that must be taken before the Charters are secured. (The Union is already working on the information and material required by the FDIC).

It was apparent from the discussion that the FDIC has no objections to setting up the credit unions on the Canal Zone and in fact, is very much interested in establishing them at the earliest possible date.

The delegation was advised that as soon as full approval is obtained from the authorities and the preliminary work has been completed, the FDIC will have its representative on the Zone for a couple of weeks to explain the working of the credit unions and set them up for business. It is expected that the entire process will take about two or three months.

Historic Trip . . .

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tion to Mr. Ickes on his recent column which described the plight of the "silver" workers. He stated that he was outraged at the treatment accorded to these loyal workers under the United States flag and would write further columns so that every American citizen might know of this shame.

On the following night a reception was given the delegation at the home of Dr. Williston, a renowned physician in Washington. Present were Congressman Blatnick, the secretaries of several other Congressmen, Belford Lawson, noted attorney and community leader, and various CIO officials. This was the wind-up social affair given the delegates, and plans were concretized to build up steam behind their program. These plans included fund collection, publicity, and legislative activity.

As the delegates wearily waited for their plane to take off from Washington airport on their return flight to their homes and families, they knew they had accomplished an historic mission. The shouts, applause, and ovations they had received still rang in their ears. The gasps of surprise and unbelieving looks on the faces of their listeners as they heard about "silver" discrimination, were indelibly imprinted on their minds.

Later as they looked down upon the far land of Washington from the plane hundreds of feet above, the delegates bid farewell to their thousands of new friends in the unions, in the communities, and in Congress and to the heartfelt memories of real democracy from really democratic people.

Delegates Impressions

HEREIN ARE THE DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS THE VARIOUS DELEGATES OF LOCAL 713 HAD OF THE SECOND BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE UPW-CIO, HELD IN ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY.

PASCUAL AMPUDIA

During my visit in the United States I was convinced that the vast majority of the members of United Public Workers of America—CIO are really democratic. Furthermore, I was convinced that the International Union is powerful because of its activities, such as the National Convention, the conferences held with Congressmen, attorneys, writers, journalists, and distinguished American citizens. Another of my greatest impressions was of my meeting with Mr. Paul Robeson who told me: "Ampudia, keep the Union strong, and we in the United States will cooperate with you."

DAVID ALEXIS

The sending of a delegation from Local 713 UPW-CIO, to the United States of America, for the purpose of attending the "International Convention", and the broadcasting of conditions adverse to the so-called silver worker, has caused a new light and a new hope for everyone.

It is my belief that with a better press relationship and a more harmonious association of the two groups of workers here, the Panama Canal can become a better place for the working man.

FOSTER G. BOURNES

My impression of the Second Biennial Convention of United Public Workers of America-CIO can be wittled down to three words — DEMOCRACY IN ACTION. In "covering" the Convention of Local 713; in chronicling the things I have seen and heard, a conviction, full-blown and mature, came to my mind: That it would be comparatively easy, all arguments to the contrary, for the races of mankind to work together harmoniously for the advancement of humanity. And, the thought persists, that if left alone the working men and women of these Americas would establish, in time, a true, workable and universal democracy.

CLEVELAND GREENE

The Second Biennial Convention was a true observation, of where the essence of democracy went into full display. Men and women of different races, creeds, nationalities and religions had the privilege of saying just what they had in their minds, without being intimidated by any threat of dictatorship. I have learned at the convention that seeing is believing. The policy adopted for UPW-CIO within the next two years will be full of fight.

GRAHAM LEWIS

Meeting with hundreds of other delegates of the UPW-CIO, I am firmly convinced that the salvation of the so-called "silver" employees rests with the power and strength of this great International Union. Therefore, I urge every employee of the Canal Zone to be a part of this Union which has demonstrated democracy in action during the Convention sessions. Furthermore, I am convinced, after my trip to the States, that all the propaganda and attacks against our Union have no basis and are unfounded charges aimed to weaken and destroy our organization.

Successful . . .

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ated and the unlimited funds they possessed for entertainment. Many questions were asked as to who were their wealthy backers.

As for the delegates from Local 713, they had seen similar characters in their own back yard and were well attuned to their campaign of sabotage and disruption.

President Abram Flaxer was introduced to the convention on the morning of the first day and received an ear-splitting and heart-warming ovation. From this point on the disrupters, renamed by the delegates as "Bust the Union Com-

mittee," fought a dying cause. Their leaflets petered out, their hoarse shouts shrank to demoralized whispers and groans.

The convention proceeded with spirit and gusto. All members of the Panama delegation were assigned to important committees — Ampudia, "Officers' Report;" Bournes, "Rules;" Lewis, "Resolutions;" Alexis, Constitution;" Green, "Credentials;" Brodsky, "Appeals;" and Sachs, "Rules." The delegates were busy. Brother Lewis had the most exhausting job, being on the Resolutions Committee, which is always the busiest assignment at union conventions. He and twenty others had the task of sifting through over 600 resolutions on subjects varying

"PAY INCREASES NOW!" WORKERS DEMAND

The demand for a basic pay increase is now heard louder than ever. It is a known fact that "silver" pay scales are pathetically low. They were low in 1940, but they are far lower today because of skyrocketing living costs and the refusal to grant a general increase.

The reclassification was never considered to be the answer to rising living costs. In the words of the administration, it was only to introduce order into a chaotic wage structure. In the words of one of our members — "It affected too few, it came too late, and it gave too little."

When the commodity market broke in February 1948, on all sides one could hear, "Well, this is the end; prices will start falling now." But prices did not fall. Quite the contrary, they rose. By the end of May another two cents had been

clipped from your pay dollar because of inflation.

There is no doubt that thousands of "silver" workers and their children are going hungry. Cases are reported where whole families have to "skip" a meal because of the lack of money. Clothes have been worn and patched until they are mere rags.

No one is shedding tears over the member who complained that he had to drop smoking because of no money, but when a family can serve only plain rice and tea to its children—then something is very wrong.

Everyone is looking forward to a basic wage increase on July 1st a substantial raise that will ease the burden of inflation, not a token adjustment. Many are saying, "We don't know how we can go on without more money in our pay checks."

from wages to a demand for peace.

On the second day of the convention, Albert Fitzgerald, President of United Electrical Workers, one of the mightiest CIO unions, gave a speech that reverberated for days through the halls of Chelsea Hotel. He commended President Flaxer as one of the most militant and principled trade union leaders of his time and stated that he carried out the true principles on which CIO was founded.

He drew a vivid picture of the conspiracy among big business to stamp out trade unions and the dangerous shadow of fascism hanging over America behind the veil of witch hunts, loyalty tests, and red-baiting.

He came out unqualifiedly in an endorsement of Henry Wallace for President, calling him "the only hope for the common man." "Don't be deceived," he said, "over the red hysteria raised about Wallace; he is the one person who carries out the traditions of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wallace."

On the second day of the Convention, Pascual Ampudia made a brief but powerful speech introducing the Panamanian delegation to the convention. He concluded with "Viva los Trabajadores Públicos Unidos de América," "Viva Abram Flaxer!" The delegates rose to their feet in a mighty roar of enthusiasm, and from that time on, the word "Viva" became the keynote of the convention. The halls of hotel rang with "Viva" for the duration of the Convention.

On the third day, Paul Robeson, the great Negro leader, spoke to the delegates. His was a speech that vibrated with the sincerity of a man who had dedicated his life to the full emancipation of his people. "America," he said, "still had a long way to go in providing a decent life for its people." He spoke of his visits to mining villages in West Virginia and in the slums of Chicago where "the blessings of democracy" rang as a mockery in the ears of suffering people. "The Canal Zone, too," he said, "in its shameful treatment of the "silver" workers, is a stain in American traditions of democracy." He concluded his stirring speech with a rendition of

"Freedom Train," of which thousands of records have been made in the United States.

Not all of the convention was speech making. The delegates also addressed themselves to the serious business of establishing policy on important questions affecting public workers. A hard-hitting resolution aimed at the undemocratic and unconstitutional Keefe rider was passed. This rider, attached to various appropriations bills, would prevent federal workers from joining unions of their own choice and is openly aimed at smashing UPW. The delegates in an inspiring demonstration unanimously resolved to fight the rider in every front, and to use legal means if necessary.

Resolutions were passed calling for lowered prices, passage of legislation to protect civil rights of minority groups—particularly Negroes, a return to Big Three Unity to build an enduring peace, and to fight unrelentingly against the Taft-Hartley law and other repressive anti-labor legislation. Scores of other resolutions were passed, including the program of Local 713 which is dealt with elsewhere in Union, calling for a better way of life for all people.

The convention culminated with the election of international officers for the coming two years. When the name of Abram Flaxer was placed in nomination for President, the resulting ovation left no doubt in anyone's mind as to the desires of the convention. Except for three or four glum-faced disrupters Flaxer was unanimously re-elected.

Roy Eldean, a postalworker from Chicago, was elected Vice President. Ewart Guinier, who was born in Paraiso, was elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Guinier holds the highest office of any Negro in a CIO union. Bob Weinstein was unanimously re-elected as Director of Organization.

Board members were elected from every region of the union. Local 713, which according to a change in the Constitution, now assumes full regional status as Region 14, has Max Brodsky, Pascual Ampudia, and David Alexis as its representatives on the International Executive Board.