

LOCAL 88 NIXIES

FEBRUARY 1971

VOL. 6

STATE OF OUR UNION by Francis Fehrenbach, President

Another calendar year has passed very swiftly. It is again time to look around for members who will be willing to serve as officers for two years or one year depending of the positions. It doesn't seem that we have a great rush of persons coming forward to run for office. The running in most cases is in the opposite direction. Most organizations this size do not have this much difficulty getting people to run for office. Let us try to explore some of the reasons why this is true in our case.

We shall begin by taking a look at our dues structure and what our union has accomplished for us. Just last year our increase in wages amounted to about 18% plus, and everyone will now reach top salary in just eight years. During the past 10 years postal employees have actually done better than any other labor organization, we have received wage increases totaling about 65%. This, I believe is an outstanding record. This does not include fringe benefits in increased government participation in insurance premium payments, increased life insurance available, liberalized retirement benefits, improved regulations regarding being called as a witness at trials and many more.

In order for our dues to have kept pace, they would now be \$4.00 per month. Sixty per cent of \$2.50 is \$1.50. Our dues increased \$1.00 about two years ago. I know what most members reaction is right here. What do you want with the additional dues money for? I haven't even said that dues should be raised but since you mention it I am of the opinion that they should be increased at this time. I will try to point out why I believe the local needs the additional dues.

What is the most frequent reply when any member is now asked to attend a school for educating members to negotiate a contract or for any other union function? I sure do not want to use my annual leave to go to that. Now, if you do not wish to use your annual leave to try to secure benefits for fellow members????? Is this why four of every five members refuse to become involved? All the previous local contracts were negotiated in the evening and or afternoons whenever those involved could either get annual leave or convince management that they should come down in the evening. This was done by no more than three or four employees and primarily by two. Those two will not negotiate another contract under similar conditions. Countless additional hours were also used preparing proposals.

The acquiring of benefits is going to be harder and harder to achieve. If you do not believe this just take a look at the gag rule our benevolent postmaster general tried to put into force. And despite any denials now this was his intent. This is only the beginning, make no mistake about that!!

We are now a full fledged trade union subject to the regulations of other unions. We also have the same priveleges and responsibilities except two which are imposed by law as exceptions in our case. These two of course must eventually be removed if we are to function as a true trade union. We must therefore cultivate every friend we can both on the legislative side and non legislative.

In order to secure all the help we can to reach our goals it is also important that we now rejoin the Fargo Trades and Labor and also the State ALF-CIO organizations. The question here arises as to what help these organizations have given us. The answer is probably not too much, but how much help do you expect from an organization to which we do not belong? Also if we belonged to the organization, we would have representation and could introduce resolutions for consideration. Our views would get wider distribution. We would be in a position to ask for their assistance.

Fargo has also been attending training programs sponsored by either the Mpls local or the Minn Fed. of Postal Clerks. These programs cost those organizations money to sponsor. It is time we in North Dakota start sharing in the cost of these programs. It is therefore our intention to sponsor a seminar next Sept. or Oct. I'm now asking for some people to come forward to help with the arrangements. It is for these reasons what our dues should now be raised to \$5.00 per month so that these programs can be carried out.

We will now accept further nominations to run for President, and other offices as well. Although nominations were made at the Feb. meeting the ballots are as yet not printed and arrangements can be made to place your names on the ballot.

HAPPENINGS AT THE STATE LEVEL
From Past President Harvey A. Lien
of the North Dakota U.F.P.C.

I hope that you all had an enjoyable Holiday Season and that 1971 is as good to all of us as 1970 was, however we can't just sit on our laurels and past performances and hope to stay on an even keel. With the rapid implementation of different rules and regulations for the new Postal Service, we must be ready to educate ourselves so that when the time comes we can prove that we are worthy and ready to be a full pledged union. Be sure to read and understand all literature that is published by our National Officers and keep your magazines for future references.

I was honored to be able to represent our Local and also the State Federation at Bismarck on Jan. 30 for an appreciation dinner for Senator Burdick, who has done a great deal for us on the Senate Postal Office Committee. Pat Nilan, Hugo Monkkonen, Frosty Newman, President of Mpls. Local 125, Earl Miller, Local 125, Dave Hanson, President of South Dakota Federation, Ken Finney, Vice President of South Dakota Federation, Ralph Henson, Sec.-Treas. of South Dakota Federation, Mrs. Ralph (Bubbles) Henson, National Sec. Women's Auxiliary, and Wally Dockter, President of North Dakota AFL-CIO attend our meeting in the afternoon.

Pat Nilan urged all locals to join the state AFL-CIO as we need all the labor backing we can get. He also spoke of some of the legislation that passed in the last Congress. Public Law 91-630 and 91-658 both passed and will be explained in our next magazine. Nilan also said that the union has been notified that a three-judge court will hear our challenge to Fed. employee "no Strike." Laws.

We can be proud of one thing, no organization in the Federal Government has the annual and sick leave benefits that that we enjoy and that the union is making every effort to improve on them.

Dates to keep in mind:

N. Dak. State Convention in Williston on May 7,8,9.

S. Dak. State Convention at Mitchell, S. Dak., May 21,22.

A Seminar that is coming up in April at St. Paul.

Your local meetings that are held every 2nd Monday, of every month.

Election of Officers that are coming up next month.

Election of Delegates to the State Convention.

Contact your Nomination Committee if you desire to run for office or want to be a delegate to the State Convention.

"WHO SAYS WE CAN RELAX?"

Pat Detwiller

SINCE our last issue, we find ourselves in this Postal Corporation. It is quite true that we don't know just what to expect, however as each passing day slips by, we can see where this Postal Corporation is going to step on some toes. So far about all the news we have received is that they are going to start from the top and reduce the force in some regions, or maybe eliminate some regional offices. You will notice that one of the first items on our bargaining table is a demand that no layoffs be made during the life of the contract, so therefore with our National Officers concerned about that one item, it must mean that they have some "Inside Rumors". We are going to find out that it is going to cost much more to run a Union under this Corporation. We are

going to have to hire many more lawyers than ever before, we are going to have to have the 100% backing of the AFL-CIO. Most of us think it is rough when we don't get a raise at a certain time----just what would we think when they start eliminating certain jobs?

I feel that we must remind you of some of the benefits that our National Officers are pushing for this year; FULL PAYMENT OF HEALTH INSURANCE***IMPROVEMENTS IN SICK LEAVE* **IMPROVED RETIREMENT PROGRAM***NEW GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES** *NO MORE PART TIME EMPLOYEES***NO REDUCTIONS DUE TO MECHANIZATION***IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS***ESTABLISHMENT OF TWELVE HOLIDAYS PER YEAR***A 35 HOUR WORK WEEK***COST OF LIVING SALARY INCREASES. Now we all know that all of these benefits will not become a reality this year, however you must remember that all the benefits, so therefore it has been the practice of the National Officers to concentrate more on salary one year and benefits the next year, so we must not relax. In this coming year and future years we will be hearing a lot about "The Magic 80" and many other nicknames for "80". What it means is that when many of us get five or ten years in, we start to talk about retirement. I predict that with-in fifteen years we will be allowed to retire with 25 years of service regardless of age----but right now we are hoping that the administration will agree on this "Magic 80" bill which enables a person to retire with any combination of 80 years---for example age 55 with 25 years of service or any combination you want to make up as long as it adds up to 80. If this legislation gets finalized this year, it will be a great improvement in the retirement program.

OFFICERS FOR 1970-1971

President	F. Fehrenbach
Vice President	L. Scott
Fin. Secretary	E. Mayer
Rec. Secretary	L. Gill
Sgt. At Arms	H. Schafer
Hospital Rep.	C. Wilson
Trustees	M. Johnson
	D. Howard
	L. Nelson
Benefit Assoc. Rep	E. Mayer
Tour Stewards	L. Gill
	Mel Johnson
	R. Balme

Sick Call Reps.

B. Warner
L. Chase
P. Detwiller
E. Entzminger

4TH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

G. Peterson

The Fargo Postal clerks will hold their 4th annual dinner dance Saturday, February 27, at the Bowler. This is free to all Fargo Postal Clerks and a \$3.00 charge for their spouse or guest. Music will be furnished by the Hal Kenny band. We urge all Fargo postal clerks to sign up early for this special event.

NOTES FROM YOUR HOSPITAL PLAN

Cy Wilson, Hospital Rep.

I'm quite sure most of you are aware of what double coverage means as it affects our hospital plan. For the benefit of new members especially, I'll try and explain very briefly. Our plan will not pay benefits which might be duplicated by another insurance plan where an employer pays all or part of the premiums. If you have a private plan on which you pay all of the cost of the premiums, the double coverage feature does not apply and you can collect from both the Federation plan and your private plan. If anyone has questions regarding the above, I will try to answer them because it does get rather involved as to who is the primary carrier, etc.

By now all of you who are enrolled in our plan, especially the high option plan are pleasantly aware you now have \$3.34 more take home pay due to a reduction in our share up from 21%. Also I might add, our plan was the only major plan that reduced the cost to our members to any extent. In addition we were able to increase some benefits. I notice Blue Cross found it necessary to increase their cost about the same amount we decreased ours. One more reason for enrolling in the Federation Plan.

Our National Officers will continue their efforts to gain additional reduction in our cost, with a goal of 100% prepaid premiums.

At this time I wish to advise our hospital plan members that due to a recent ruling by the IRS requiring all hospital plan carriers to report to the IRS, all Doctors receiving \$600.00 or more during a calendar year. Due to this ruling, we have new revised medical forms available. These forms have a space at the bottom where the Doctor should fill in his social security number if he is an individual practitioner and his employee number if he is a member of a clinic or similar group. It will be a great help to our office in Silver Spring if all of you will use these new forms which I have available. They have some sort of magnetic tape arrangement where they store this information until needed to report to the IRS.

With the membership getting larger all the time, it will help me better to serve our sick or hospitalized brothers and sister if any of you know of someone that is sick, be sure and notify me.

AUXILIARY NEWS
Mrs. John Forness

The women auxiliary held their January meeting in the home of Mrs. Lyle Iken with Mrs. Harvey Lien assisting. Election of Officers was held; The new Officers for the coming year are:

President, Mrs. John Forness
Vice President, Mrs. Dale Perkins
Secretary, Mrs. Darrel Moser
Treasurer, Mrs. Pat Detwiller

Plans are in the making for a winter card party to be held in March. March 20th has been selected and we will surely help the guys with the arrangements, more on this will be discussed at our next meeting.

Our next meeting will be held March 11th. Hostesses will be: Mrs. Mel Johnson and Mrs. Marvin Peterson. All visitors are welcome to attend, so if you are interested in attending a meeting write down March 11th on your calendar.

NEWS FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S DESK
Ed Mayer

Well its been quite a while since I have had the opportunity to get in contact with all of You. Financially we closed the Old Year in real good condition. If having money in the bank is a sign of progress I would have to say that we have a very progressive Union.

Some of the anticipated expenses for the coming year, are the State Convention in Williston in May. Maybe some Seminars throughout the year, where I don't know.

Some of you might say these are needless expenses. Maybe so. But in view of all the changes that will be coming with the beginning of the new Postal Authority, I think that these Seminars are a must for every Local. To be there is to be informed and to be informed might well mean the difference between getting better working conditions or losing some of those that we already have.

As most of you probably know the National dues increased by 35¢ per member per month with the start of the New Year. Not much you might say, but multiply that times 165 and it comes out to quite a sum each month. Our refund checks from National will that much smaller each month.

One of the things which think must be considered by our Local is joining the AFL-CIO Trades and Labor Council. Both locally and the State Chapters. This is a new thought for most of us. As in the past we have always turned to Congress for all of our needs. Not so any more we are now just another Labor Organization, and might well need some help from our Parent Organization, which is something that would be pretty hard to expect if we don't belong. The projected cost for this is 45¢ per member per month.

Do I think we need a dues increase? Maybe not so urgently right now. But I do know that it is something that should be considered in view of the projected expenses we have coming. Even with a small increase we will still be way ahead percentage wise as to the amount of dues. We pay and the pay raises we have received the past year. If you don't think so just ask around with some of the other Labors Unions.

WINTER CARD PARTY

The wheels are turning in preparation for a winter card party. Plan now to reserve Saturday night, March 20, 1971 and come and join us at the Trades & Labor Hall at 403 7th Avenue North. This will be quite similiar to the other ones we have held at this hall along with the auxiliary. Whist will be played, prizes will be given and refreshments will be served. Remember you can bring outside guests and in the past we have had several and we received some fine compliments from them. We will again have that fine lunch served by the Auxiliary. We will soon have the registration board up on our bulletin board so be sure and sign up and join us for a evening of whist.