

# LOCAL 88 NIXIES

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

by Francis Fehrenbach

We have a lot to report on since our last paper. What with elections and conventions this is a busy year.

I'll just touch base on some of the early happenings. Our state convention in Minot where Mike Carroll was elected President for a two year term. We shall now have state conventions only in even numbered years with a seminar in odd numbered years. We also had the Special election on the North Dakota constitution. A thank you is in line for everyone who got out and voted.

The next item, in which I am sorry to say, Fargo did not actively participate was the May protest rally. Those of us who negotiated with management surely felt local management left much to be desired. Or is the memberships reluctance to participate due to the officers and stewards doing an exceptionally good job? Consultation still seems to be -- we're going to make the following changes. This is always comes before anyone even knows that there is a real problem.

The first election by referendum pallot is now over. The results in the whole were something less than surprising. It sure is disappointing to have only 50% of the members show enough interest to vote. While this is a commendable method of electing officers, does the record justify the tremendous cost? We could, I believe, use our resources in a much wiser manner. It is very unlikely that many unions use such an expensive method of electing officers. In view of more mergers in the future, it would be wise to take a second look and think this over again.

Now is the time for you guys that have sons or daughters in the senior class in high school to make your move. The time is now to write Owen Schoon for an application to get started on the Hall Beck scholarships. It sure seems the small effort is worth the prize. \$50.00 four successive years should be worth while going after. The odds have to be better than most other scholarships. Check page 17 of the July issue of the American Postal Worker for all the rules.

#### NORTH DAKOTA AFL-CIO CONVENTION

First of all I just received about ten copies of the entire AFL-CIO convention that took place in Jamestown in October of 1971. I would suggest that everyone would read it. I have some in locker 277.

Another Labor Convention can be added to the history books. Harvey Lien, Mel Johnson, and Francis Fehrenback attended for the local.

Harvey was a member of the Political Education and Candidate Review Committee. They visited with most of the candidates running for state office. This turned out to be a great deal of work. It was ultimately decided that the wisest course would be to delay all candidate endorsements until after the primary election in September.

Mel served on the constitution committee. The constitution needs some major revisions which are difficult to decide upon such a short exposure. They did recommend to the Executive Board for study the question on how roll call votes should be conducted.

I again found myself on the resolutions committee. We studied two resolutions in regard to money being appropriated and inspectors being assigned to conform to the Railroad Act on 1969. These were passed. Mtrack came under fire for failing to provide needed service, and also for not soliciting more passengers. The demand is apparently there and if the Railroad Company would only fill the demand, it would likely become a paying proposition. They, however, seem more interested in a mass program of track abandonments. Trains cannot run where track has been pulled up. We want more study before abandonments and also have public hearings.

Many North Dakota employees are in the service trades. We supported a resolution to get a member of their union on the wage board. If successful, this could be a giant stride in raising the ridiculous \$1.15 per hour minimum wage in North Dakota. We should try a trickle up method of spurring the economy. Give these underpaid more money and they will spend it and thereby help the economy.

The convention passed two resolutions submitted by the American Postal Workers Union. The first resolution had the following resolves -

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: by this convention that we go on record as favoring the continued subsidy to the postal service to insure the people of this state of adequate postal service, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the postal service be ordered to discontinue the flagrant cutting of service, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that these sentiments be conveyed to our congressional delegates, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: that these sentiments be conveyed to the National AFL-CIO and the entire congress of the United States.

The other resolution would repeal the Hatch Act and give Postal employees political freedom. The more people we contact and make aware of these conditions, the more help we can get in correcting them. I did spend about an hour before the legislative committee answering questions as to why we believed this resolution should be passed.

The convention also passed resolutions regarding collective bargaining, overtime pay, health insurance, and retirement plans for state and public employees.

Under the present North Dakota law, if an employer fires an employee, and is engaging in unfair labor practice and is ordered to rehire that employee, he is not now required to give that employee back pay. A resolution was passed to have that provision incorporated into the North Dakota law.

These resolutions are all fine and very worthwhile. They will all be presented to the state or national legislatures as appropriate. Now I should like to let each of you know what you can do to help to get these passed into law. You can be sure you are registered to vote in Minnesota, if you live there. Then if you live in either North Dakota or Minnesota be sure to get out and vote for those candidates that will enact this legislature. We have three months to find out what all the candidates stand for. Those now in office, let's take a hard look at their record. Who or what have they stood for in the past? It's not likely that they will change in the future. We must all become involved. Action must be taken to save American jobs. We shall try to have more on that subject at a later date.

This does not cover all the resolutions but should give you all some idea that a lot of work is actually done at these conventions. We do need every one of you to become involved if we are going to move forward.

#### NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT

by F. Fherenbach

Saturday, August 12. Benefit Association Convention.

1. Changed its name to American Postal Workers Union Benefit Association.
2. Beginning January 1, 1973 dues will advance to \$1.50 per month.
3. Daily benefits will advance to \$7.00 per day 7 days per week.

This about covers the important items covered by the one day convention. If anyone knows of Benefit members who have retired and are now paying their dues direct, please let the Secretary know as this is no longer allowed. All benefit dues must now be paid thru a local.

Sunday clerk craft convention was a matter of formality in satisfying the constitution. It was mainly a matter of greetings from the officers of the APWU. President Filbey made the promise that he would render "just decisions" in any differences between crafts. He would not allow any craft to take advantage of or take away what belongs to another craft.

Monday morning and early afternoon was taken up with formal greetings from various dignitaries as well as speeches from Senator McGee and Representative Daniels as well as the Keynote address by President Filbey.

Senator McGee asked for much more participation in politics by government employees. He maintained too many government employees have been hiding behind the Hatch Act as an excuse from becoming involved. He suggested it might be well if we had a penalty for those who fail to exercise their responsibilities. He also took some pot shots at Red Blont, our former Postmaster General, as well as some former Democratic leaders.

Representative Gominick Daniels, of New Jersey, asserted that he favored the right to strike for postal employees. He also criticized the postal service for their early retirement plan as a way to circumvent the contract. He also maintained that postal employees should be included in lower cost health insurance coverage along with other government employees.

President Filbey's keynote address urged all delegates to condemn the Nixon administration for its anti-labor actions.

He also cautioned against endorsing Senator McGovern until we find out what his intentions are in regard to the right to strike and other APWU aims.

Mr. Filbey also stressed the importance of electing Senators and Congressmen (Democratic or Republican) who will support the APWU's legislative goals. We must get from Congress the tools to negotiate on even terms with the postal service. He also urged the delegates to authorize the APWU to enter into merger conversation with the Communication Workers of America. He maintained that the Postal Service is already in the telegraphic business. Further mergers with the remaining postal unions will be impossible as long as committees are hamstrung with unacceptable preconditions.

Mr. Filbey also stated he favored that future contracts would need to be ratified by the entire membership before becoming binding. He is confident that a good contract can be negotiated for the membership next year.

After a great deal of debate, the convention finally adopted 28 rules to govern the convention proceedings.

Tuesday and Wednesday were primarily taken up with the constitution committee chairmans report to update the APWU constitution. When a resolution to increase the dues to \$2.00 per month was introduced, which also provided for a minimum dues structure of \$5.00 per month for local dues, it practically brought the convention to a halt. The ensuing debate along with the endless amendments to the amendments almost defied anyone from knowing exactly the nature of the propositions on which a vote was being taken. Usually, however, we finally would get back to the original proposal. In this case it boiled down to whether or not a per capita increase was justified. With a division of the house being called for almost every vote, the per capita increase was defeated. The delegates were generally dissatisfied with the proposed budget not containing any plan or proposal for a reduction in the officers needed to run the union in Washington D.C. A resolution was passed to appoint a committee to study the needs of the union and report back to the next convention.

A resolution was offered to endorse Senator McGovern, but after much debate it was more or less delayed until a definite statement was received from the Senator regarding APWU aims.

Thursday action by the convention included the authorization of the President to call a strike for any reason if it is deemed necessary and approved by a majority of the Executive Board. The debate here took somewhat longer than it is taking you to read this report. Another attempt to increase the per capita tax in various amounts was defeated by a very wide margin. It was now completely obvious to everyone that no per capita increase was going to be voted by this convention.

A letter from Senator McGovern was presented to the convention, in which he endorsed the aims of APWU in their legislative goals. The convention then reconsidered its endorsement of the Senator, and again made the endorsement by a very wide margin.

Nominations for two positions as delegate to the AFL-CIO convention took up the remainder of the day.

Fridays session opened with the first order of business being the selection of the APWU paramount issue of demand. The Right to Strike as expected won easily as the paramount demand. Other goals in their order of preference were: revision of the Hatch Act, the Union shop, double time for Sunday & Holidays, elimination of best qualified in favor of senior qualified, restoration of Star routes to the Motor Vehicle Service, and the elimination of all contraction out provisions from the Postal Reorganization Act. Full job security and 100% payment by the Postal Service of all hospital, retirement and insurance costs were also included in the convention demands. This was perhaps the only time one could say that the vote was unanimous on the part of the delegates.

A mandate for the national to seek area wage differentials was the next order of business. Needless to say a stormy debate was touched off by this resolution. It was finally settled by a roll call vote in which it was approved by a majority of 1437 votes. The resolution reads that the national will, "seek area wage differentials on the basis of the best available statistics to as to achieve parity in living standards and enable all our members to house, feed, educate or otherwise provide for themselves and their families with dignity, decency and security."

Miami, Florida received almost half the votes and the choice for the APWU convention in 1974. Detroit, Michigan was second and Washington D.C. third.

The credentials committee reported a total of 519 locals represented. All 50 state organizations were represented. It is important for the small locals to have representation at the National Conventions, as we can pass favorable resolutions for us as long as we can prevent the vote from going to a roll call vote. This is done primarily by keeping the rule for a roll call vote needing a total of 750 seconds. Usually some of the delegates from the large locals will vote against the roll call vote as it is so time consuming. A roll call vote usually takes at least three hours

The Saturday session was consideration of as many resolutions as possible. The most important of which allows a local to take a matter to arbitration if they are convinced such action is necessary or desirable and are willing to pay the costs. With the adoption of 50 or more resolutions it is not possible to print them all here. If the membership will read their national magazine, I expect those passed will all appear there in the months to come.

This about completes my report and if any member has any specific question regarding the convention feel free to ask me about them. If I can I shall be most happy to try to answer their questions.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

We recieved a letter from Mr. Ralph Jensen, of Rapid City, South Dakota, concerning the check we sent to the APWU members who were effected by the flood. As of about the first of August very little of any of the money the Rapid City local received had been spent except for immediate needs such as blankets or a place to live temporarily.

One reason is that some of the persons left homeless may not be allowed to rebuild again in this same location because some of the land may be used as part of a flood central project.

The gift we sent was gratefully acknowledged and deeply appreciated.

In case there is some member who did not know a total of almost \$500.00 was collected. This amount came from APWU members and one night foreman.

## STRANGE

Doesn't it seem kind of strange that because quite a few Postal employees were put out to pasture, a postage rate increase wasn't necessary at this time. It would seem quite natural to assume that most were rank and file postal employees. In other words just plain clerks, carriers, mailhandlers and so on. Just imagine what a savings if only half of the postal management would be put out to pasture. This would be the half that isn't necessary.