

LOCAL 88 NIXIES

MARCH 1975

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

by F. F. FEHRENBACH

The next meeting of the Fargo APWU will be on Monday evening April 7, at 7:30 PM. The meeting location will be the Trades & Labor Assembly building at 3002 1st Ave N. Fargo. Mr Larry Gervais Nat'l Vice President from St. Paul will attend for installation of officers. He will also bring a training film on Union Stewards. It would be well if everybody could see this film and know just what our stewards are supposed to do. We will also have a question and answer session.

I am at a complete loss as to what our membership really wants. You people elect officers, and completely oppose what they are trying to accomplish. Your officers can only point out areas where action should be taken, you the members must provide the means. If you do not agree with your elected officers, I suggest that you run for office and try to provide the direction.

At the last meeting there were some complaints that they didn't know the function of the union Stewards or just how to file a grievance, and how come more members were not educated in this respect. The first thing I want to make very clear is that those members who are knowledgeable in this respect didn't accidentally acquire their know how. Each and every one of them used many days of their annual leave, money and energy to go to union functions and learn. The last few years most of the comments heard are "I sure don't want to use my annual leave for That!" As long as you don't want to use annual leave, don't expect that anyone else should either. There is only one other way, that is to put people on LWOP and pay their salary from the union whenever they are on union business. However, this cannot be accomplished on a dues structure of \$4.50. So I intend to operate in that vein, which I made very clear before the last election. When the local treasury goes broke, we will probably cease to function. There will then be no need for the members to come to their officers to find out what is going on locally or nationally.

Now that we have made sure that money will be short, I'll point out a few items of importance to the members which will take place this summer or early fall. First a National Constitutional convention in Kansas City in June. You feel it is not important? Recommendations of the restructuring committee include that the minimum number of members for a local is to be 200. It also does not provide for any MAL'S (members at large) after 1978. We don't know the real reason behind this, except that it must be the large locals that wish to accomplish this change, and if successful can then take over complete control of the national conventions. As it is now usually some 200 locals are represented and of this number something like 150 would probably have less than 200 members, By having people on the convention floor from a small local, we can usually cut off roll call Votes.

The large locals can pass anything they want if they can get a roll call vote. I don't see how this proposal is in the best interest of our members. The time to take precautions is now, there is no need to lock the barn door after your horse is stolen.

It is also time that we get busy in the legislative field again. President Ford has recommended a 5% ceiling on wage increases for postal and federal employees and retirees. The \$998.00 cost of living increases plus the \$300.00 or so we will get in May would also be scaled down to a total of 5%, which would be effective until July 1976. Any item we can get at the bargaining table can be taken away by legislation, should it be in conflict with any law that is passed prior to our signing a new contract. I sure hope more people of our local will vote when it comes time to ratify a new contract. As I recall less than half of the membership returned their ballots.

It's possible a Washington legislative conference could be held later this year, if the national office feels it would be worth while. North Dakota elected officials have voted favorably for us most of the time, but again if we ignore them they surely forget who we are too.

There is also a conference scheduled in Grand Forks, N.D. after the new contract is signed. Perhaps no one cares to know what is in the new agreement.

Our local Memorandum of Understanding will also expire on or about July 21, 1975. I suppose a new one needs to be negotiated or perhaps the membership doesn't want another local agreement. Many of you might think management does everything just like they want to anyway. Perhaps not quite. Without any contract they could hire and fire at will, change working hours daily and assign you arbitrarily any hours they choose. No overtime pay or Sunday premium pay or night differential. Perhaps no annual or sick leave or you could maybe get off at their convenience, just to name a few. It is high time the membership woke up and got busy. Everybody says "What has the Union done for me". better "What have YOU done for YOURSELF because you are the UNION."

SEE YOU AT THE UNION MEETING APRIL 7 AT THE LABOR HALL.

Report from the outgoing Vice-Pres.

Harvey A. Lien

I will start with a short report on the first N.D. & S.D. joint Legislative Seminar that was held in Bismarck, N.D. on March 7 & 8.

It started with a short meeting Fri. night at 8:30 PM. We had the introduction of the Nat'l Officers that were attending the seminar. The introduction of state officers from Minn. , S.D., and N.D. A short discussion of what was on the agenda for the seminar. After the meeting we had a short social hour which was enjoyed by all.

At 9 AM sharp Sat. morning we started our legislative part of the seminar with Pat Nilan, Legislative Director for the APWU from Wash. D.C. making a few remarks. His remarks started on a hopeful note;

The right to strike bill may reach a vote by the full house and chances are good for a more favorable vote than we have had in prior years. The "Combination 80" bill has been introduced by Congressman Danils and they are hopeful of some type of early retirement will probably be successful this year. Other legislation which will affect the retirement program: a bill to exempt the first \$5000. annually from Federal Income Tax. H.R. 144 to eliminate any deductions for survivor benefits. A bill is pending for an increase in Government Health Benefit premiums. The Blind Vendor Amendment has finally passed because not enough resistance was presented by the postal union and also that the congressmen feel that they had not received enough letters from people like you, that were concerned with the loss of that revenue.

As for Presidents Ford's proposal for a 5% ceiling on wages- Hopefully since we negotiate for wages we may not be included, but it could result in a loss of wages if we loose the cost of living increses that we have gotten as they are not a part of our wages, and then the 5% will be figured on the wages after the cost of living is taken away which will amount to about \$1,250 by the time the new contract is to be signed.

After his remarks we had a film showing the legislative program of the APWU and also a workshop test on what we had seen on the film. His closing remarks before the noon hour break was that we had to get more members interested in the union and get them out for meetings as that was the only place you can get information to the members.

After dinner we had a hour of question and answer period with the APWU Hospital plan representative which turned out to be very interesting as he was able to help explain that we, or the doctors and clinic were doing wrong in filling out the claim forms. If the claim forms are filled out properly the claim payment should be paid within five days after arrival of the claim.

Mike Carol, our State President gave a report on some of the proposals that are to be negotiated on in the new contract. I will list some of the proposals. The 204B's cannot belong to the union, a 35 hour work week, no overtime list, double pay on Sundays, 20% night differential, two 15 minutes wash up periods, replace cost of living with top step in 2 years, wage increases of \$2500 1st year \$1500 next year. 5% increase in wages for every 5 years in service. Change sick leave to 5 days before having a doctor certificate. No sick leave list. Add holiday of Martin Luther King, Election Day, Birthday and a employees holiday when he wants one each year. Sounds good.

Larry Gervais, Nat'l Vice President from St. Paul gave a report on some of the proposals for change in the new constitution that will be brought up at the convention in Kansas City, Mo. on June 2-5. One of the big items was that they make all locals to the size of 200 members or more. This would affect our local to the extent that we would have to join with Moorhead, West Fargo, Valley City and even possible with Detroit Lakes and Wahpeton. Other locals in the state would be cut to two locals in the rest of the state, S.D. would have only two locals in the entire state and Wyo. would have only one local.

Just think of the cost of dues would be if we had our local pres. in Detroit Lakes or Wahepton and had to finance him for his expenses ant time he was needed in the other offices in the local. The next time any dues increase is voted on get behind your union and vote for it so that we have enough money to send enough members to the conventions so that we can fight this kind of thing.

The Afternoon was completed with a report from the Human relations representative.

In the evening we attended a banquet and dance with 118 people attending. we didnt finish up on Sat. as we planed, sowe met again at 9;00 AM Sunday for a couple of hours discussion on stewards and the protected rights of Union Stewards. Also had to do a workbook on the writing of a grievance and all the steps a grievance goes through if it goes to arbritration.

Larry Gervais is attending our next meeting to show us some film and answer any question that you may have. So be sure to attend and get in the know at our meeting on April 7. 1975.

Kermit Jenson will be installed as Vice President at this meeting, so at this time I would like to thank all of you that have attended the meetings and made my job as Vice President a lot easier.

A Report from Mel Johnson

It would seem that it is high time all of us members should take some time to help ourself and our fellow workers. Everyone of us can do something, so there really isn't ant excuse that we can use to not do our part. One area we can all take part in is contacting our congressmen. Let them know what legislation we want that will be of benefit to us and our families. We should let them know how our office operates. If we are not giving good mail service to our patrons, we should let them know what is happening. Even though we are not tied to legislation like some years back because of the Postal Reform Act, Congress holds the purse strings. Write to our congressmen and tell them the facts, because when we get a good supply of letters in Washington the congress will ask the Postal Department to explain why things are done in such a way that it is not giving service. All of us want to have a Monday to Friday work week and be on the day tour, well write and tell your story to your congressman. Tell them how money is wasted because of stock piling mail until the evening hours and we do not prime and cancell originating mail except once a day (24 hours). They don't know these things.