

THE CIO NEWS

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JET CO. SWEATSHOP

HITS CIO

Read This—

"BULLETIN NO. 7

"EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 1943:

"ALL HOURLY EMPLOYEES WILL WORK A SIX (6) DAY WEEK, MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY.

"HERETOFORE, IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO OPERATE ON A SEVEN (7) DAY WEEK IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS OPERATION IN THE PLANTS OF OUR CUSTOMERS. WHILE PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED SOMEWHAT IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, IT IS STILL FAR SHORT OF OUR REQUIRED SCHEDULE. IN GRANTING THE SIX (6) DAY WEEK, IT IS OUR HOPE THAT EACH AND EVERY OPERATOR WILL PUT FORTH AN EXTRA EFFORT TO INCREASE AND MAINTAIN THEIR DAILY PRODUCTION AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR.

"IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE INCREASE AND MAINTENANCE OF INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE THE SIX (6) DAY WEEK, AND WE TRUST THAT EACH AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL WILL PUT FORTH THEIR BEST EFFORTS TOWARD THIS END.

"NATIONAL JET COMPANY,

"E. H. CUPLER,

"ASST. GENERAL MANAGER."

On Feb. 1 the management is all for more production. Note the veiled threat in the last paragraph. Workers complained that the strain of this exacting work seven days a week was ruining their health.

Unions Boost Red Cross; Bosses Hold Back

CUMBERLAND—Cordial endorsements from unions in the whole Cumberland area poured in to the Red Cross drive as Mrs. Albert Dean, Executive Secretary of the Allegany County Chapter, announced that American prisoners at Zentsuji, Japan, are now definitely getting relief goods and mail from home.

Local 1874 unanimously endorsed the drive and voted to request the company to cooperate by making payroll deductions. But the company has always balked at such deductions. So have other plants in this area.

The Western Maryland Industrial Union Council has also voted endorsement of the drive, and the W. Md. Utility Labor Conference voted its support and sent a check for \$10.

RED CROSS ONLY LINK

The Red Cross is sometimes the only link between this country and prisoners of the Axis, and can get information that the U. S. Army cannot get, said Mrs. Dean.

For example, a Lonaconing mother had a son in the Philippine Islands at the time of Pearl Harbor. Following the conquest of the Philippines by Japan, the mother had no more news of her son, and the war Department on being queried by the Red Cross on her behalf, reported only that he was

"missing." Finally after laborious negotiations conducted through the medium of neutral Switzerland, the Red Cross established that this boy and two others from Allegany County were held as prisoners by Japan.

The Allegany County chapter has sent more than 300 inquiries regarding persons in enemy territory, including also civilians who were marooned. A nurse from Lonaconing who had malaria and could

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• MOVING UP—Papuan carriers of the Southwest Pacific Islands are shown here as they cross a river in the jungles bearing a case filled with Red Cross comfort articles for U. S. servicemen in the front lines of the Pacific theatre of war.

Firings Hit War Production

Refusing point-blank to reinstate a worker who had agitated for a union, General Manager John A. Cupler of the National Jet Co. in this city deliberately crippled his working force by "furloughing indefinitely" nearly half his 33 non-supervisory employees, with a hint that they should apply for work elsewhere.

Selection of workers for "furlough" had no relation to seniority. There is reason to believe that the management chose for layoff the half of the working force which it thought was "tainted" with unionism. Employees who had expressed hostility to unionism were kept at work.

CONTRADICTS HIMSELF

Only as recently as February 1, the management of the National Jet Co., which produces fine drills for military uses, complained of being unable to keep up with its required schedule, and in a posted bulletin urged its employees to produce as much in six days as they had been producing in seven. Elimination of the day of rest was nothing for a staff containing several girls under 18, who also worked at all hours of the night in violation of the law.

But when half the non-supervision force was "furloughed" February 19, the "Notice of Furlough" stated:

"For the past four to five weeks, there has been a drastic curtailment in our production schedules due to engineering changes being made in products manufactured by our customers.

It is impossible to reconcile this statement with the February 1 bulletin quoted above. Ironically, Mr. Cupler had the same day posted a notice that all were free to join a union.

VIOLENTLY ANTI-UNION

Further inconsistencies in Mr. Cupler's statements were noted by Horace B. Davis, newly appointed field representative of the Western Maryland CIO Council, who called on Mr. Cupler February 18 to demand reinstatement of the fired worker.

This worker, said Mr. Cupler, had the belt on his machine running wrong. The foreman had ordered him to change the belt, and when he remonstrated, had fired him. However, it was learned independently that the next day another member of the force found the belt as the fired worker had always run it, and asked if she should change it. The foreman said, "It is not necessary."

Hostility of the Cupler family to unionism is notorious. Workers being interviewed for employment have been queried as to their union sympathies, although such questioning is a violation of the law. A move for unionization in 1942 was met with dismissal of an active union member, and a warning to the whole day shift that unions would not be tolerated.

SWEATSHOP WAGES

Mr. Davis estimated that wages at the National Jet Co. are about half those paid for comparable work in the vicinity.

Mr. Cupler is cooperating 200 per cent on the war bond payroll deduction plan, as far as his employees are concerned. Workers whose pay check would have amounted to \$16 for a 40-hour week have \$2 deducted for bonds—the amount is set by Mr. Cupler. This leaves them,

—and This: 2 Weeks Later

"NOTICE OF FURLOUGH

"For the past four to five weeks, there has been a drastic curtailment in our production schedules due to engineering changes being made in products manufactured by our customers. While this condition is temporary, we have no way of knowing just how long it will continue.

"For this reason, it has become necessary for us to furlough indefinitely the larger portion of our personnel employed on drill making. As soon as this condition improves, you will be notified when to return to work. However, in the meantime, should you be desirous of obtaining employment elsewhere, your employee's release will be granted upon request.

"During this period of curtailment you are entitled to receive unemployment compensation from the State of Maryland Unemployment Compensation Board. Form UC 207 is herewith attached to facilitate your making this claim.

"NATIONAL JET COMPANY

"J. A. Cupler,

"General Manager

"E. H. Cupler

"Asst. General Manager."

Note that the furlough notice complains of curtailment of production schedules "for the past four or five weeks." These notices were passed out Feb. 19. Union-minded workers, go elsewhere, is the plain message conveyed.

Day Care Centers Needed Now, Says Cumberland Woman

CUMBERLAND.—Women in the Cumberland area who have war work or who plan to get such work, and who have no adequate provision for their young children under 15, are to be numbered in the hundreds, it is now generally agreed.

In order to establish this fact definitely, so that child care centers may be set up with the aid of federal (Lanham Act) funds, Mrs. Evelyn Coleman, president of the CIO Women's Auxiliary, has written a letter to the Chairman of the local War Manpower Committee, Mr. Dave Staley, urging a poll of the women in war plants.

Private provisions for the children of mothers on war work are frequently unsatisfactory, mothers are saying. One mother who had been leaving her baby with a neighbor was late to work because the neighbor had sickness in the family and was unable to take the child that day. Another found the shift system too complicated to tie in with the schedule of her own mother.

The pool of woman power in Allegany County will not be fully utilized until adequate day-care centers are set up, in the opinion of observers.

Superintendent of Education Kopp agrees that the situation is one that calls for a remedy, and plans to apply for Lanham Act funds as soon as the information at hand has been checked and

after social security deductions, less than \$14 to take home.

CIO FILES CHARGES

Charges of unfair labor practices have been filed against the National Jet Co., and it is announced that a National Labor Relations Board examiner will arrive in Cumberland shortly to probe the charges. The workers at the National Jet Co. have a right to a union and are determined to have one.

Many jobs at the National Jet Co. require a precision that recalls the work of a jeweler. The drills which the company manufactures have at the point a thickness of only three ten-thousandths of an inch (.0003 inch). Employees being broken in were formerly paid 20 to 25 cent in violation of the Wages and Hours Law; they are now reported to receive 30 cents, which is gradually raised to 40 cents. Some receive more: Mr. Cupler says cynically: "There is no maximum."

supplemented, perhaps, as early as the end of March.

The Western Maryland Industrial Union Council at its Feb. 25 (Continued on Page 7)



CHARLES E. LANNING, General Secretary-Treasurer of the United Rubber Workers of America-CIO, was the scheduled speaker at the banquet arranged by Local 26 of the URWA on Sunday, Feb. 28. Lanning, who is very popular with the rank and file of his organization, had a message on labor's effort in a people's war, and the difference between this war and other wars both in its conduct and in the peace which is to follow; also on the vital interest which labor has in certain legislative measures, and on the need for boosting the sale of bonds.