$15 Boost Won For ‘New England’ Men; 5 Cent Off-line Work Increase

Climaxing a full year of struggle with the New England Steamship Company, shipowner stooges and phoney War Labor Board Referees, the union won this week a monthly boost of $15 for all ratings on the New England ships, and an increase in off-line service work of 5 cents per hour. This victory was established on September 10 when the Boston Regional War Labor Board, after a confirmation of a maritime panel report containing these gains. Not only will the $15 increase go far toward eliminating the wage differential between New England jobs and similar work along the coast, but the union won a retroactive clause which means that every man will receive the increase as of December 9, 1942. This means over $100 in the pocket of every New England man at once. Any man who either quit or was discharged since the retroactive date, shall receive the amount of the increase up to the time he left the employ of the Company. These men must mail their written application for retroactive pay to the Company within 14 days.

The Regional War Labor Board failed to grant the men all that was asked by the union, but under the circumstances the decision is acceptable. The history of this case is long and stormy, with the shipowner and his allies using every legal and illegal dodge in the books in order to escape paying the men a living wage. It was in the fall of 1942 that the union first attempted to negotiate an increase directly with the owner. Although New England wages were potentially “sub-standard,” the shipowner hid behind the “Little Steel Formula” and refused to make any concessions.

On December 9, 1942, the case was certified to the War Labor Board and a new series of run arounds began. WLB Referee Newheald the union case, and ruled against us on every point. His ruling was then upheld by the Boston Regional Board. Coit’s ruling, and his logic, so outraged the basic principles upon which the case was immediately appealed to the National War Labor Board in Washington. Full proof that the Referee handed down a phoney decision was the fact that the National War Labor Board directed the Boston Regional Board to reconsider the case.

It was on July 23 that the original case was before a maritime panel appointed by the Regional Board, and once again overwhelming evidence of the sub-standard nature of the New England wage scales. No sooner had this panel hearing adjourned than shipowner stooges went to work on the New England boats and within 24 hours had frozen out the strikers, thus making it impossible for the shipowners to stop the men in their struggle. The purpose of this was to jeopardize the SIU case before the Regional Board.

Prompt action by the union got the ships sailing and placed the blame for the stoppage directly where it belonged—on the shipowner. On August 2 the Panel meeting was handed down, and on Sept. 10 this decision was confirmed by the Regional Board. We reprint the panel’s full report and recommendations, all of which became binding (unless appealed by the shipowners) within 14 days.

NMU AND “STABILIZATION”

The National Maritime Union is now negotiating a new contract with the shipowners. The NMU’s demand is for stabilization. This word—stabilization—sounds good. It sounds as if it were on the side of law and order and motherhood and the eternal verities. Anyone who would be against stabilization must, of course, be a disrupter. And disrupters "do Hitler's work."

Stripped of all these fancy implications, stabilization means to the NMU the granting of wages and conditions comparable to those won by the SIU.

This may come as a shock to some NMU rank and file members who swallowed the Stalinist propaganda designed to convince them that they enjoyed the best conditions on the waterfront. The cold facts are—the NMU has never had wages and conditions comparable to those of the SIU. And there is a reason for this.

In the final analysis, wages are won by the strength of picket lines. There is no substitute for this weapon when dealing with the bosses. Labor Management Committees, stabilization conferences, unity moves, and all the rest of the paraphernalia used by the Stalinists to smother the class struggle, can not bring improved working conditions to the workers—and the rank and file members of the NMU are now beginning to understand this.

It is because of this awakening on the part of the NMU rank and file that the leadership must now make desperate moves to bring their contracts up to the level of those held by the SIU. But even now they don’t turn to real trade union struggle to achieve their ends, they don’t threaten the shipowners with the economic power of their union—rather do they phemlge with their fellow-travelers through the back doors of Washington in the hope of winning by bureaucratic ukase that which which they failed to earn through unionism.

And, of course, this betrayal of the members is dressed up by the leaders in the Stalinist “Steel Formula” and refused to make any concessions. The NMU’s struggle for a stabilized national agreement is part of a larger fight which is already in progress directly with the owner. Although New England wages were potentially "sub-standard," the shipowner hid behind the "Little Steel Formula" and refused to make any concessions.
Labor Wins Victory In War On Anti-Union Laws

Organized labor won a major round this week in its battle to knock out state anti-union laws that would make it an unconstitutional infringement on the rights of workers. Its first taste of victory came in Colorado, where Judge Charles C. Sackman of Denver held invalid the most vicious sections of Colorado's labor-shackling law, labeled a "labor peace act.

Colorado's law is the worst among nearly a dozen passed by state legislatures during the past year, most of which are being challenged in the courts.

SECTIONS TOSED OUT
Judge Sackman tossed out the sections which call for compulsory incorporation of unions and regulate in detail the legitimate activities of unions. These sections restrict the amount of dues and initiation fees unions may charge; compel unions to open their financial records to inspection; prohibit them from picketing; and put a stopper on the brothers in line with the steadily expanding part being played by the SIU that has in the past, and will in the future, conduct such struggles.

Money Due

Extra meals money coming to following crew members of S. S. Woodridge: Ferris J. Davis, John Davis, John Brown, and William Davis.

Overtime is coming in following crew members of S. S. Arkansas: Paul Huer, Lee Maus sage, J. H. Mudge, and A. Langly.

Editor's Mail Bag

This brain-buster is too smart to be plain and, too dumb for anything else; so, failures and mistakes he makes a lot of fun.

He beefs about our hard-work ing officials, seeing only trashy slum work, but never goes delegate himself; it's too much responsibility to work for the good of the Union, not his good!

His latest battle station is taken out—and it is the SIU that has in the past, and will in the future, conduct such struggles.

As a matter of fact these kids are coming into the industry with basic training paid for by each and every taxpayer. Look at your deductions, Wise Guy. Instead of giving them a bad time, wouldn't it be wiser to welcome them and educate them as seamen to top off their "training"? Wouldn't it be wiser, Wise Guy, to make them potential steady union men, rather than probable scabs?

For all, they do come out of the taxpayers' school with more knowledge of seamanship than some draft or tour-type seaman.

Papa Takes Union Post

Johannes Pama, formerly of the London (England) office of the Dutch Central Transport Workers' Union, has assumed the post of assistant district secretary here, according to an announcement made yesterday by P. J. Vandenberge, head of the union's American branch, which arrived in this country last week.

Mr. Vandenberge said Mr. Pama's water was one of several moves made by his group, an affiliate of the International Transport Workers' Federation, the interest of general efficiency and in line with the steadily expanding part being played by Dutch shipping in the war effort.

He also disclosed that G. E. Ravold, veteran head of the Dutch union's main office in London, is en route to Curaçao, where he will take charge of that office's reorganization. He is being replaced at that branch by G. J. Vandenwoesty n.
I. That the monthly scale of wages for each classification be raised by $40.00 in the monthly wage structure of the Company for the last increase.

B. The Issues

1. Summary of the Union Position

The Union, at the hearing held on the 16th of March, presented its case in favor of a $40.00 increase in the monthly wage rates of all classifications on the following grounds:

(a) Increase for Off-Line Service

The Union requested that an increase of $40.00 per month be granted to each of the classifications involved, to be effective February 1, 1941.

(b) Increase for Defense Service

The Union also requested an increase of $40.00 per month for those employees working in defense service, to be effective February 1, 1941.

2. Increase for Off-Line Service

(a) Union Position

The Union stated that the increase for off-line service should be granted to all employees working on the inland waterways of New England. The work performed by these employees is comparable to that of other companies operating in the area.

(b) Company Position

The Company argued that the increase requested by the Union was not justified, as the work performed by these employees was not comparable to that of other companies operating in the area.

3. Increase for Defense Service

(a) Union Position

The Union stated that the increase for defense service should be granted to all employees working in defense service, as the work performed by these employees is comparable to that of other companies operating in the area.

(b) Company Position

The Company argued that the increase requested by the Union was not justified, as the work performed by these employees was not comparable to that of other companies operating in the area.

4. Rates for Classification of (a) Deckhands

The rates paid for the classification of deckhands are as follows:

- Ordinary Seamen: $82.50 per month
- Ablebodied Seamen: $92.00 per month
- Second Mates: $128.00 per month
- Porters: $70.00 per month
- Utility Men: $82.50 per month
- Pursers: $170.00 per month
- Ticket Collector and Watchman: $90.00 per month
- Watchman and Abroad Seamen: $90.00 per month
- Ordinary Seamen (Ivy): $82.50 per month

The Union has requested that these rates be increased by $40.00 per month, to be effective February 1, 1941.

5. Rates for Classification of (b) Deckhands

The rates paid for the classification of deckhands are as follows:

- Ordinary Seamen: $82.50 per month
- Ablebodied Seamen: $92.00 per month
- Second Mates: $128.00 per month
- Porters: $70.00 per month
- Utility Men: $82.50 per month
- Pursers: $170.00 per month
- Ticket Collector and Watchman: $90.00 per month
- Watchman and Abroad Seamen: $90.00 per month
- Ordinary Seamen (Ivy): $82.50 per month

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The Panel has determined that the rates paid by the Company for the classification of deckhands are comparable to those paid by other companies operating in the area.

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In the tasks performed in the various departments. They should be maintained.

3. Rate of Overtime Pay

The present arrangement on the part of the Company that any employee regardless of classification shall receive eighty cents per hour for overtime rate to all employees, but argued that the rate should be raised to ninety­
cy  

The Panel can see no justification for changing the rate of overtime pay. The present rate of the eighteenth century represents com­

The Company argued that the summer vacation schedule makes the summer vacation hour work schedule for these classifications. At other times in the year the vacation schedule is such that unless the eighteenth hour work schedule obtained, Company policy would be required for considerable overtime. The two hours is not set at one time, but is broken up during the day. The Union argued the men shall be called back to work at any time during their time off. The response was, however, that in the two hours off in several smaller periods, but claimed that whenever possible, the time off is scheduled when the boats dock at New Bedford and, since there is stop over at New Bedford from one to two quarters hours, they then get most of their time off in one period.

The Panel believes that where­

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is hereby recommended that:

1. Effective as of the payroll period commencing December 9, 1942, the date of certification of the issues to the WLB, the monthly base rate for employees working on off-Line Service Work be increased by $1.50.

2. Effective as of the payroll period immediately following December 9, 1942, the date of certification of the issues to the WLB, the monthly base rate for employees working on off-Line Service Work be increased by five cents (5c).

3. The Union's request for in­

4. The Union's request for a change to a continuous eight hour schedule all year round for the Second Mates, Boat­ 

5. Effective as of the payroll period immediately following December 9, 1942, the date of certification of the issues to the WLB, the monthly base rate for employees working on off-Line Service Work be increased by five cents (5c).

The Board also approved a 5c increase of wages for the dock and ship labor in New Bedford, Mass., and elimination of wage differentials between dock and ship labor in the Atlantic and Gulf ports. The two orders where, however, and as things stand now there are no national standards governing wage rates on which there are to be applied by employees. These wages are in the form of a wage scale as approved by the Wage and Hour Administration, Department of Labor, and may be modified by the Commissioner of Labor. The wage scale is as follows:

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1. Basic wage rates in Gulf ports range from $5.00 to $6.00 per hour.

2. Basic wage rates in South Atlantic ports range from $5.00 to $6.00 per hour.

3. The new rates in Gulf and South Atlantic ports are effective January 1, 1943.

The Board also approved a general increase of 5c per hour for all employees employed on the north end of the New Bedford, Mass., area. The increase is a fair one.

The Panel on the other hand, feels that the present rate of the eighteenth century represents comparable wages paid to employees working on off-Line Service Work.

The Panel, therefore, recommends that the Union's request be granted, and that the wages paid to employees working on off-Line Service Work be increased by five cents (5c).

The Union's request is hereby denied.

Penalties

The Recommended Order of the Regional Board which approved the recommendations of the Panel is as follows:

1. The Panel can see no justification for changing the rate of overtime pay. The present rate of the eighteenth century represents compa­

2. Effective as of the payroll period immediately following December 9, 1942, the date of certification of the issues to the WLB, the monthly base rate for employees working on off-Line Service Work be increased by five cents (5c).

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