

Fairless Comments on Proposal Of Union to Reopen Contracts

Benjamin F. Fairless, president of United States Steel Corp., commenting on the announcement of the United Steel Workers of America that the union is giving notice to reopen existing labor contracts with various steel-producing companies, said today:

"We believe in holding the line against inflation and have practiced that sound governmental policy to date. We shall continue to do so as long as this is possible. But if the line is to be breached by the union the steel corporation is certainly entitled to adequate protection against the financial consequences to it of that breach.

"If our employment costs are to be further increased as a result of wage and other demands by the United Steel Workers of America and by the United Mine Workers, we have no recourse other than to seek a compensating increase in steel prices.

"One of the many demands of the Steel Workers Union is reported to be an increase in wages of 17 cents an hour for most employees. This would increase our basic common labor rate in the Pittsburgh district from 78 cents an hour to 95 cents an hour, an advance of approximately 22 per cent. The justification is alleged to be increases in the cost of living.

Increases Cited

"Since the commencement of the present national emergency, the increase in labor rates within the steel corporation has kept full pace with the advance in the cost of living index. On Jan. 1, 1941 our basic common labor rate in the Pittsburgh district was 62½ cents an hour; this was increased to 72½ cents an hour on April 1, 1941 (when there had been little or no recent increase in the cost of living), and was further increased to 78 cents an hour on Feb. 16, 1942. Such hourly common labor rate is today nearly 25 per cent in excess of what it was on Jan. 1, 1941. The United States Department of Labor reports an advance in its costs of living index of approximately 25 per cent between Jan. 1, 1941, and the present time.

"Increases which have been made in our hourly common labor rate, although in full accord with the reported advance in the cost of living index, tell only a small part of the hourly wage story. The important consideration is what does the average steel worker actually receive per hour, and how much does he take home at the end of each week. Most of our employees receive wages on the basis of rates far in excess of the common labor rate.

"The average hourly earnings

of all wage earners in our steel-producing and fabricating subsidiaries, both North and South, has risen from \$0.853 an hour in January, 1941, to \$1.159 an hour in October, 1943, an increase of 35.9 per cent. During October, 1934, the average weekly earnings of all such wage earners, embracing about 185,000 employees, was \$50.42 per week, as compared with \$33.01 per week in January, 1941. This is an increase in wages of 52.7 per cent per week, or more than double the reported advance in the cost of living index during the same period. Part of this increase is occasioned by time and one-half pay for overtime.

Steel Prices "Frozen"

"What has happened to our steel prices between Jan. 1, 1941 and the present time? Practically nothing. Prices for major steel products today are the same as the published prices of 1939. A ceiling on steel prices at such level was established by O.P.A. in April, 1941. While our prices for steel products in general have not advanced, our costs have gone up most substantially since Jan. 1, 1941. Increased labor rates alone have added about \$135,000,000 a year to our total employment costs throughout the steel corporation. Building up our manufacturing operations to full capacity, with resulting economy from such greater production, has been a major factor in enabling us to date to absorb these additional costs and leave a small balance for our stockholders. The end of that road has been reached, however. We cannot repeat this operation, as we are now operating at full capacity. Furthermore as the end of the war grows nearer, there may be some recession in our operating rates.

"If wage earners are granted pay increases, adjustments upward on a similar scale must be made to our salaried employees in the lower salary group. Corresponding wage and salary increases will inevitably follow in our other subsidiary companies not engaged in the manufacture and fabrication of steel. It is estimated that a wage increase of 17 cents an hour after including all the adjustments and increased social security and pension costs which must ensue therefrom, will add approximate-

City Officials 'Kid' Each Other. But Score Tied

City Engineer Glenn Jain was "kidded" last week by Chief of Police John Stroth about a communication dated Nov. 26, which was received Nov. 30, advising that Nov. 31, was the zero date for "C" ration tire inspection of police department vehicles. After "criticizing" Jain for having consumed all of four days to deliver the letter he asked: "How come that November has 31 days?" Of course, this was all blamed to Jain's deputy, Walter Bradford.

Later in the week, Jain heard about a trip the police chief made to Los Angeles and on his return stopped in front of the Torrance postoffice where he parked his car. After transacting his business with Postmaster Earl Conner's staff, Stroth walked over to the police station, leaving the car at the curb. Some hours later, so the story goes, the chief discovered that his car was missing from its usual place in front of the police headquarters.

Inquiries were instituted. No one had seen it. The thought ran through the chief's mind—may be it had been stolen. Then he remembered he had left it at the postoffice. The car was recovered just in time to miss an over-parking ticket. Now Jain thinks the score is evened.

ly \$141,000,000 a year to the total employment costs of the steel corporation. This estimate takes into consideration only one of the many reported demands of the United Steel Workers' union."

New Torrance Tract Houses Going Rapidly

Several families are now moving into their new homes in Torrance Terrace located on Carson st., between Western and Normandie, according to Fred S. Bauersfeld, manager of sales and rentals of the new tract.

The homes, which are F.H.A. approved, are of two and three bedrooms and are available to families of war workers in the Torrance district.

The dwellings are priced at \$4650 for two bedrooms, \$5250 for the three bedroom models, including a large lot. An introductory down payment of only \$290, plus F.H.A. charges and impounds is now in effect.

Improvements include sewers, sidewalks and paved streets. Mr. Bauersfeld point out that the new homes are within walking distance to many war plants, as well as the Torrance shopping district.

Bus transportation is available between outlying industrial plants and downtown Los Angeles.

Persons interested in procuring a home in Torrance are urged by Mr. Bauersfeld to first apply for a "V" eligibility card at the Torrance War Housing Center, 1119 Sartori ave. The card should then be taken to the Torrance Terrace Tract office, 1541 Carson st., between Normandie and Western aves. Houses are being shown daily and all day Sunday.

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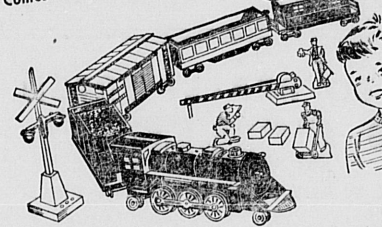
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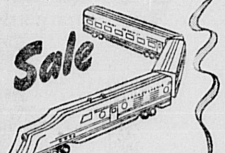
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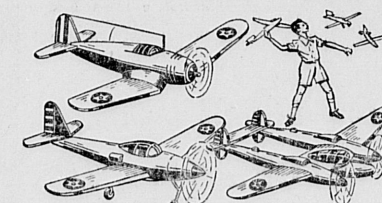


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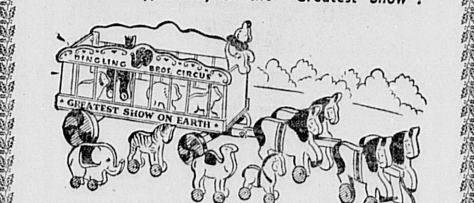


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