

Business

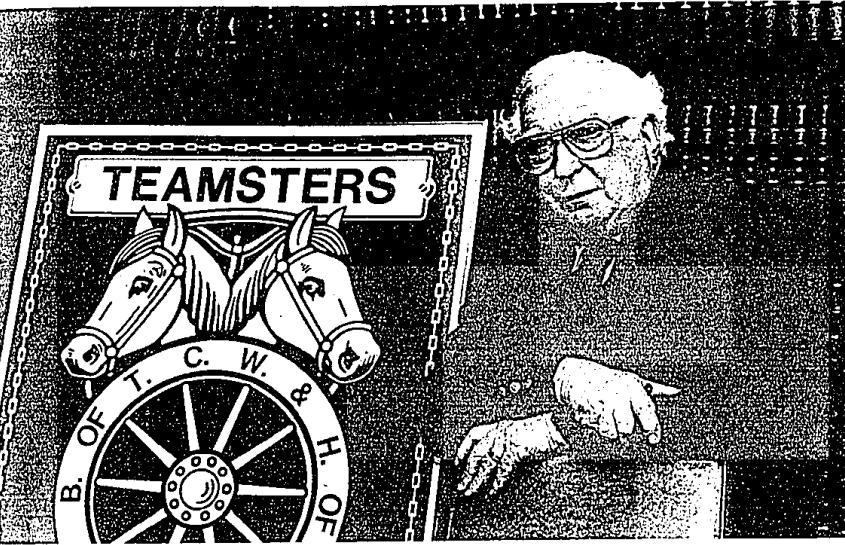
Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300

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Thursday, March 24, 1988 O&E



THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

One of Bobby Holmes' latest achievements was the laying of the groundwork for the current negotiations with flight attendants at Northwest Airlines.

Standard bearer

At 76, Holmes still promoting union label

By Kevin S. Morris
staff writer

Bobby Holmes, still deft and negotiating at 76, recalls a time a decade ago when a handshake was a contract, when business negotiations were few and well, all but a few months long. Teamsters actually wore blue collars.

Today, 51 years after becoming a

founder officer at Teamsters Local

337 — now the largest in Michigan

— and 59 years after joining his first

union, Holmes still lives by a simple

credo: If it moves, sign it up.

That credo, fortified by sagacity

and diplomacy, has made Holmes, a

resident of Farmington Hills, a

Teamsters icon. His list of Teamsters' posts supports that character-

ization: second vice president, the

union's four-time international

representative director of the Central

Conference, overseeing

more than 500,000 members; and

president of Local 337 and its 10,500

members, one-seventh of all Michi-

gan's Teamsters.

But THE RESPECT he garners is

as much a tribute to his own abilities

as to the cachet of the union. Its

brash, high-drama past has helped

create an aura for the Teamsters,

from its capacity for implosion and

recovery to the mystery of Jimmy

Hoffa's disappearance.

"There's no secret about the labor

movement," said Holmes, a faint

English accent from the land of his

birth adding cadence to his speech.

"We're under such close scrutiny,

We've probably had more investiga-

'Look, we did not invent the robot. We did not invent high-tech. The numbers are there, but they are not the same types of jobs.'

— Bobby Holmes

to fill. He's got some keys that some people don't even know about," Robert F., a 29-year assistant to his father, added. "Robert Holmes is a scoundrel, Robert F. is a saint."

One of his most-used keys is the ability to create a working environment for negotiations, pulling the sides together early and helping to set parameters for debate. He helped lay the groundwork for the current negotiations with flight attendants at Northwest Airlines, which the Teamsters won the right to represent in 1988.

Despite the prenegotiating civility, Holmes is aware that to remain a strong voice for its members and to work with the other major organizations in the AFL-CIO in increasing membership, the Teamsters have to become more adaptive.

"They (newly unionized locals) are not the same type of membership," Holmes said. Bemoaning the loss of jobs once the bastion of union representation, he said, "Look, we did not invent the robot. We did not invent high-tech. The numbers are there, but they are not the same types of jobs."

"We are going to have to gradually adjust ourselves. The new members have a college degree and the like," he said.

Holmes' thinking — pro-labor — remains relatively unchanged since the two years he spent in the heart of England as a teenage coal miner. From those sooty roots at Hoyland Common to his plush home in Independence Commons in Farmington Hills, Holmes has retained a sense of solidarity, now somewhat detached in his role as leader, with the work-

ers.

"I've been an advocate for calling it a movement. I expect you'll see a movement in the future. But we better get interested politically because that's where the power is. We've got to have unity among ourselves."

The more frequent payments slash interest costs and shorten the loan's maturity. Interest savings result two ways: Interest is recalculated every 14 days, instead of the usual 30, on the steadily decreasing balance. And biweekly payments result in 26 half payments a year, the equivalent of 13 monthly payments. This saves the term of the loan.

A BIWEEKLY mortgage based on a 30-year fixed rate loan will pay off in about 21 years, saving

'It saves the home buyer about 40 percent of the interest costs over the term of the mortgage.'

— John Kuri
First of America

the buyer more than \$40,000 in interest on a \$50,000 loan.

Moore says this plan is superior to making double payments on a conventional mortgage, a common practice to reduce the principal because interest on a biweekly mortgage is calculated every two weeks.

"Making double payments, you still pay 30 days' interest," he said.

Buyers who finance their house with a biweekly mortgage make a payment every other week amounting to half the monthly payment of a traditional 30-year fixed rate loan. Current interest rates offered by Great Lakes are 9.5 percent for 30 years, 9.0 percent for a 15-year loan.

The more frequent payments slash interest costs and shorten the loan's maturity. Interest savings result two ways: Interest is recalculated every 14 days, instead of the usual 30, on the steadily decreasing balance. And biweekly payments result in 26 half payments a year, the equivalent of 13 monthly payments. This saves the term of the loan.

"We're not giving a product right

now, but we are evaluating the market," said Randy Boileau, a spokesman for Comerica.

"We are not getting involved with that program," said Chris Etienne, assistant manager for Manufacturer's Bank of Livonia.

"Our mortgage department feels the mortgage holder can make double monthly payments anytime. We don't see the advantage of offering a separate program."

Please turn to Page 2

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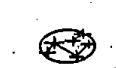
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