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Consumers Power Strikers Stay Out

By DOUG JOHNSON The striking Consumers Power workers rejected a company bid to end the 101-day old strike Wednesday. The company had asked the 5,400 members of the Utility Workers Union of America to come back to work at old wages when President Nixon's wage-price freeze was announced seven days ago. But the union has declined, sticking to its demand for amnesty for workers dismissed for strike-related misconduct.

headquarters in Jackson, the company promised to continue talks, but appeared unwilling to back down on the amnesty stand. By week's end, no strike-related incidents were being reported, and picketing was quiet.

THE STRIKE began May 11 and has been marked by violence and heated bargaining. Locally, only one major incident has marred the company standstill - the gas lights on the Consumers Power property on Farmington Rd. in Livonia were vandalized with damage estimated at \$4,000.

Other minor incidents locally involved gas bottle drops. The odor in natural gas in your home comes from an additive the power company adds. A bottle of the additive dropped in the right place brings quick calls to company headquarters about gas odors and leaks. It is a form of harassment, company officials say.

CORRECTION: The Pickwick Shop ad of 8-18 should have said "Shop Sunday" New Orleans Mall Store only, 10 Mile at Greenfield, Avenue of Fashion shop and Downtown Birmingham shops are closed Sundays.

OPEN EVERY EVENING TIL 9 pm SUNDAY 12-5 LIVONIA MALL 7 Mile-Middlebelt

LOCALLY, THE continued walkout threatens to slow new home progress this fall. The strike, which began in mid-May, has idled about 200 workers assigned to the Consumers plant in Livonia. According to James Thomas, Livonia manager for the gas firm, supervisory personnel have "been able to keep their head above water," handling the company's day-to-day service problems.

Central to the settlement of the strike now (in spite of the freeze), both union and company agree, is the question of amnesty for workers who have been involved in the incidents of vandalism, and in some cases elsewhere in the state, assaults and threats.

Two years ago a similar strike lasted 89 days. The Livonia plant serves Livonia, Farmington, Plymouth, Northville, Wayne, South Lyon, Salem and New Hudson with gas.

"WHERE WE will be in trouble is new service lines from street mains into new homes. New construction by our crews is going to be very limited," Thomas predicted. That means people who are now building, or are having built, new homes face the possibility of delayed occupancy later this fall.

"Over the period of the strike a few militants probably more than 100 out of a total of 5,400 - have resorted to violence and sabotage. These individuals have cut primary and secondary power lines, have pounced employees and customers' cars with clubs, have attacked non-striking employees with shovels, have slashed tires of non-striking employees, and have committed assaults on company personnel, property and vehicles.

The union is insisting on amnesty for about 25 of these "militants" and has rejected mediators compromise agreement in the strike.

THOMAS PRAISED his staff, composed of 40 to 50 supervisory personnel and his office staff. The power company is not doing very much installation of gas dryers and other appliances using gas because most homeowners can find a plumber or someone else to do that, Thomas noted. Gas leaks and repairs to mains come as top priority, Thomas added.

PHILLIPS has been with C&F at the Detroit office since 1958, when he was instrumental in establishing the claim - loss department of that office. He began his insurance career in 1950 with another company and also has had experience in claims work with other organizations.

He succeeded Dr. W. Lloyd Berridge Jr., who was recently named general medical director for the division.

2 From Livonia Appointed At C&F

Two Livonia residents have been appointed to managerial posts with Crum and Forster Insurance Companies (C&F). Douglas A. Phillips, of 14147 Golfview, was named assistant resident manager of the firm's Detroit regional office.

Kermit I. Ball, who is in the process of moving to Livonia from Indianapolis, will be safety service manager for the company at the regional office.

Dr. Balaga Is Medic For Chevy

Dr. Frank T. Balaga has been appointed medical director at Chevrolet Motor Division's spring and bumper plant in Livonia, according to Plant Manager Walter O. Muller. Dr. Balaga, of Detroit, has served as associate medical director at the division's Detroit gear and axle plant since 1964 when he joined Chevrolet.

BRILL, WHO is a graduate of Bradley University, Peoria, Ill., and a member of the American Society of Safety Engineers, began his career in 1960 as an inspector with the Illinois Inspection & Rating Bureau. He joined the C&F companies in 1964 at Freeport, Ill., and in 1967 was transferred to Indianapolis as safety engineer. He was promoted to safety services manager at the Indianapolis office in December, 1968.



"WE'RE PREPARED for another 100 days," said striking union members at Consumers Power. Dale Kaiser (left) and LaVerne Wagenshuze sit under a ripped Consumers Power sign. (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)

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