Building Trades Strike; Bell, CWA Settle

Building and construction throughout the Metropolitan Detroit area is paralyzed as a result of a six-union strike which started at midnight Tuesday.

The strike came as contracts with the Associated General Contractors of the area expired with no agreement on new pacts despite last minute bargaining.

As a result, all building in the Observerland area, in which many public school projects are underway, was at a complete standstill.

* * *

THE UNION involved included some 30,000 members, and construction projects amounting to millions of dollars throughout the metropolitan area are at a standstill.

The big barrier to agreement is the span between the union demands of wage-fringe benefits, ranging up to 76 per cent, and the offer by employers of six per cent increases each year for two years.

Most of the negotiations have been with the key Carpenters Union, considered the one that will set the pattern for the others.

* * *

MEANWHILE, the strike of Metropolitan Detroit newspapers moved into the 170th day with no apparent moves in any direction.

Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley has asked a federal court to dissolve a temporary injunction barring Gov. George Romney and a special legislative committee from interfering in the strike negotiations.

There was good news in the nationwide strike of telephone employes with an announcement that officials of the Communications Workers of America and the Bell System had reached an agreement.

It will be voted upon by the individual locals over the weekend before a final decision is made. Should the majority of locals approve it, then it will be ratified by the national organization.

However, there were indications that many of the locals would reject the offer which calls for a pay increase ranging from $11 to $24 weekly over a three year period.

The original demands of the union asked for $24 per day starting immediately.

Michigan Bell officials tabbed the offer the largest wage and fringe benefit package ever negotiated by Bell and the CWA, increasing the company's non-management wage bill over three years by 19 per cent and adding $12.3 million annually to costs.

The contract offer covers 18,200 employes in the company's plant and traffic departments and the comptrollers operations.

* * *

IN THE BUILDING trades strike, the unions whose contracts expired at midnight Tuesday include: Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement and Mason workers; Operating Engineers; Laborers and Reinforced Iron Workers.

Also expiring were contracts with the Electricians, Plasterers, Marble Masons, Tile Setters and Tile Helpers.

According to statistics from the contractors, the unions are demanding anywhere from 24 per cent to 77 per cent increases in wages over a two-year period.

In the case of the Carpenters, the union is seeking $2.10 above the current hourly earnings of $5.96 the first year and $185 the second.

The total package would represent a 65 per cent hike in wages according to the Associated General Contractors.

* * *

THE MICHIGAN chapter of Associated General Contractors reported at Lansing that operating engineers, who run cranes, bulldozers and similar equipment, were on strike throughout the state.

The Michigan chapter reported carpenters, cement masons, reinforced iron workers and operating engineers on strike at Flint and operating engineers and bricklayers out in Lansing, but said carpenters were continuing to report in Jackson.

The Northwest Michigan Building Trades Council at Alpena reported 500 carpenters out in Alpena, Cadillac, Traverse City, Cheboygan and Petoskey, with no new negotiating sessions scheduled.

Some 2,500 tradesmen did not report in the Saginaw Valley District, but did not picket those who reported. The district includes Midland, Bay City and Saginaw.

Three hundred carpenters also were reported out in Calhoun County and parts of Barry, Branch and Eaton counties.

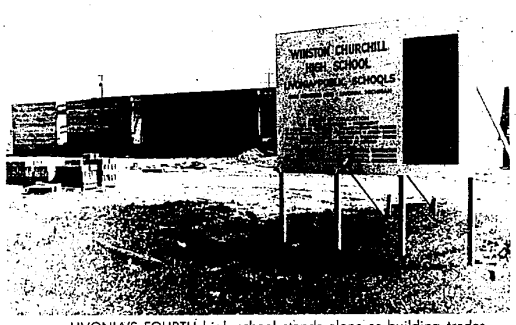
* * *

THE SOUTHWEST Michigan Carpenters Council called out some 4,000 members in a 14-county area which includes Holland, Benton Harbor, Coldwater, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Muskegon.

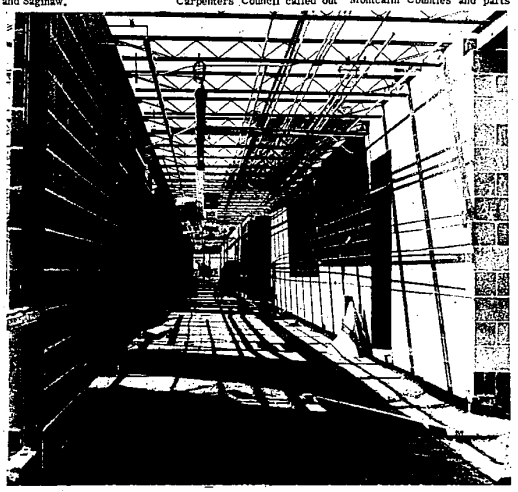
In Kent (Grand Rapids) and Montcalm Counties and parts of Berrien and Ottawa Counties, however, bricklayers were working without a contract, and in Grand Rapids cement workers also were reporting, a union official said.

Upper Peninsula contractors said they offered striking laborers an increase of 90 cents hourly spread over the next three years, but that Laborers Local 1329 had demanded a boost of 75 cents hourly in each of the next three years, or a raise of $2.25 hourly.

Carpenters were reported to be showing up at Adrian and Lansing, as well as Jackson and Ann Arbor.



LIVONIA'S FOURTH high school stands alone as building trades unions last week struck contractor F. W. Fordon Co. as part of the statewide walkout against Associated General Contractors.



PLYMOUTH'S MIDDLE SCHOOL No. 3, on Ann Arbor Rd., is ready for bricklayers, but they're on strike and may be for a long time. Six unions are on strike against the association of contractors.

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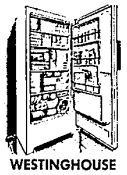

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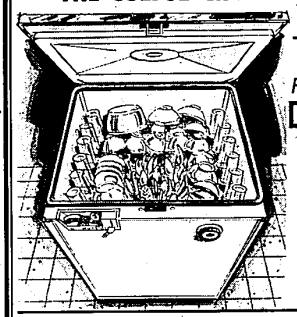

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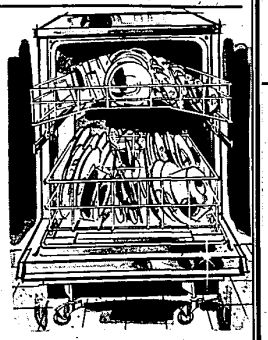

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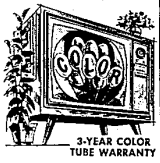

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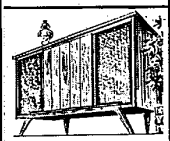

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THE COLOR CORNER
BY MARTHA BRANDT

It's no coincidence that this leap year, men are leaping into view in color as never before. If there's a man on your shopping list, here are a few tips on color in men's clothes, courtesy of the Textile Dye Institute:

1. Shirts: Turtleneck, button-down or no collar at all, shirts are more colorful than ever. If the man on your list is slim and trim, he can get away with horizontal stripes on turtlenecks (if he's not trim, better rule this style out anyway). Most any man of any size appreciates the change in pace of more colored shirts in his everyday wardrobe. Colors are now more subtle as well as more varied — thanks to the work of the dyestuff industry.

2. Tennis blues? That doesn't mean that you've lost a set, but that you can now play on some of the best courts in the world in colored tennis gear. Pastel blues and yellows with striped trim are being seen at some of the best clubs (of course, shorts and shirts must match).

3. Color is par: One of the most colorful spots in sports is, of all places, the golf course. Championship golfers have made color golfing clothes famous and now even those who think "fore!" comes after three can wear any color. Reds, bright yellows and other bright shades are the most popular. They are also the most visible — which has a protection factor as well as an aesthetic one: no excuse for hitting a golfer dressed in bright red.

Rome Debt High

ROME—The city of Rome pays over four-fifths of its annual receipts to find its municipal debt. The Eternal City now owes some $1.4 billion.