

Rank & File Metro Workers Action Caucus

ACTION

Vol. 1 No. 4 Special By-Laws Issue

COMPREHENSIVE BY-LAW CHANGES ASKED

At the January 16 union meeting, a comprehensive proposal for by-law changes was submitted by Richard Mance, an operator from Bladensburg Division, and was unanimously passed by those present at the meeting.

The executive board will now meet to consider Mance's and other proposed changes and give their recommendation at the February 6 union meeting. They will probably also make a few proposals of their own. At the Feb. 6 meeting there is no debate. At the Feb. 20 meeting, the second reading of proposed by-law changes will occur. At this point there will be debate on the merits of the proposals and a vote taken on whether to send these proposals to a referendum of the membership.

The major points in Mance's proposal are as follows:

1. Change the representative structure so that every work area throughout the Metro system that has at least 125 members will get 1 shop steward/executive board member; at least 500 members will get 2 shop steward/executive board members; at least 1,000 members will get 3 shop steward/executive board members. In addition Mance's proposal would provide for shop stewards who do not sit on the executive board according to the following formula: 125-250-- 1 shop steward, 251-375, 2 shop stewards, 376-500, 3 shop stewards, 501-625, 4 shop stewards, etc. What this means is that every significant work area in the mechanical department would have a union representative. It would mean the rail would have union representation as well as union members at OCCB. For bus drivers it also means increased representation. For example at Northern Division where you now have 3 shop steward/executive board members, under Mance's proposal you would have 2 shop steward/executive board members plus 3 additional shop stewards who do not sit on the executive board for a total of 5 shop stewards.

2. Make the 1st Vice President of the union a business agent for the mechanical department, make the 2nd vice president of the union a business agent for the operating employees and make the Recording Secretary a business agent. This would create a full-time business agent for the mechanical department to deal with problems there plus a full-time business agent for operating employees

...continued on page 2

WHAT'S IMPORTANT ABOUT BY-LAWS?

Union by-laws are important because they determine in a big way how our union functions. For example, Local 689 by-laws have not been updated since 1964. Since that time the mechanical department has doubled in size and will grow larger in the future. The subway has opened up and will employ increasing numbers of members, yet our by-laws as they stand now leave the mechanical department vastly under-represented by shop stewards and provide none at all for the rail. The number of bus operators has also increased dramatically since 1964. It is time to change our union's by-laws and update them to correct the representation situation and to insure that the rank and file will have a greater voice in its policies and how it is run.

EDITORIAL

We urge our fellow members of Local 689 to carefully study the proposals for by-law changes made by Richard Mance. We support these proposals and feel they will strengthen our union. The lack of representation among subway workers and in the mechanical department has led to talk of forming another union. We feel that this would split our strength and leave us weak in the face of Metro's unending attacks and the better way to deal with it is to equalize union representation through by-law changes.

Mance's proposals also provide for increased representation for bus drivers which is certainly necessary because its sometimes hard as hell to find a shop steward now. In addition Mance makes several important revisions in the by-laws that give the rank and file a greater voice in union affairs.

We feel that these proposed changes are necessary and in the interest of the rank and file and feel that after other members read and study them that they too will support them. Urge your shop steward to consider these proposals carefully and tell him how you feel about them before the Feb. 6 union meeting. We also urge all interested members to attend the union meetings of Feb. 6 and Feb. 20 when the proposed by-law changes will be read, discussed and voted on. Your attendance can help insure that any by-law changes are in the interest of the rank and file members.

ENLAWS...continued from page 1

to deal with their problems. It also makes the Recording Secretary able to handle grievances.

3. Make it easier to run for union office. Currently you must attend 6 union meetings each year for two years prior to the date of nomination. Mance's proposals would change this to six union meetings one year prior to the date of nomination.

4. Provide for a recall election of officers if 40 percent of the members in the unit of the officer sign a petition requesting a recall election. A 2/3 majority vote would be necessary in the election to remove an officer. This provision would allow the rank and file to remove an officer who is sub-standard but which the grounds for impeachment are weak, while at the same time providing safeguards against abuse of this provision.

5. Amend the duties of Shop Stewards to require them to spend at least two hours per week as "office hours" at the garage or other work area with these hours posted on the union bulletin board. It would also require shop stewards to conduct education of the members as to the contract and all important union business.

6. Make it explicitly possible for the rank and file to over-ride a decision of the executive board by a 2/3 vote at a union meeting.

Action Caucus

This newsletter is published by a group of concerned Metro employees who have decided to help organize our fellow employees to stand up to Metro's attacks on our standard of living, our job security, and our dignity. We also exist to strengthen our union and to make our union fight in the members' interest.

Please contact us at PO Box 611, W. Hyattsville, Md. 20782.