

LIVEWIRE



Manweb consider local company pay award

Income Warning

on 31/1/92, Bob McMahon (Head of Income - Designate), in a meeting with Income representatives and Keith Mann, indicated his wish to advertise 13 posts, being the next layer from the senior managers already appointed.

This proposal was not agreed to by your representatives who wished to discuss further with members. They did indicate that it was unlikely that they would agree as the proposal was not in line with commitments given by the Company.

Defend terms and conditions

The announcement by MANWEB that it intends to pull out of all national agreements has serious implications for all NALGO members. The current National Agreement, which dates back to 1948, has provided 44 years of security and stability for members. The benefits, often taken for granted, have been hard won over these years.

MANWEB try and justify withdrawal from the agreement claiming that we are all now separate competing companies. However, all companies have to operate within the same statutory framework supervised by the regulators office which control standards of service and pricing mechanisms. Within such a context it is entirely bogus to argue that a national agreement on terms and conditions of employment must be ruled out.

Undoubtedly, the real reason is that Manweb and other REC's see it as a means of weakening the bargaining strength of electricity staff. Members of NALGO will, therefore, be especially attentive over the course of 1992 to ensure that the proposal

for a Company based agreement is not used as an opportunity to dilute or undermine the favourable terms and conditions members currently enjoy. Members must play a full and active role in ensuring that any new agreement meets all our aspirations.

Special meetings will be convened for all members to discuss proposals for a Company Agreement - If you have not yet joined NALGO - join now,

DEFEND WHAT WE'VE GOT

- * CLEAR INCREMENTAL PAY SCALES
- * ANNUAL/6 MONTHLY INCREMENTS
- * 37 HOUR WEEK
- * CALL OUT FEES
- * VOLUNTARY PAID OVERTIME
- * SHIFT ALLOWANCES
- * MINIMUM 24 DAYS HOLIDAY
- * MATERNITY LEAVE
- * RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION AND APPEAL
- * TIME OFF FOR ELECTED UNION REPRESENTATIVES
- * FLEXTIME
- * PENSION SCHEME

EDITORS NOTE

1992 will be a decisive year for our 1,600 members. In 12 months of privatisation up to 1,000 jobs have gone, 800 staff face redeployment as districts are contracted to regions and now MANWEB announce that they are pulling out of the National Agreements.

The need for an active campaigning branch has never been more vital. The Annual General Meeting 350 members voicing their concerns about changes in the industry shows that members will not be sidelined in the debates that lie ahead.

1992 could also see the agreement for a new super-union of 1.4 million members if there is a YES vote in the ballot to merge NALGO NUPE and COHSE.

However, the increased strength this will bring in negotiations must be combined with the traditions of democracy and accountability which are a proud feature of our union.

The proposed rules and constitution of the new union must be subject to a full discussion and agreement of a NALGO conference before ballot of members is held - there must be no secret deals.

Hands off our Flexitime

Trading staff at Head Office have stood firm after Trading managers tried to force them to come off flexitime. Managers now appear to have dropped the issue after union representatives warned them they would be breaking local agreements.

What happened...

NALGO representatives waited 18 months for MANWEB to come up with the promised equal opportunities policy, before formulating and presenting our own claim in April 1991 for:

- 1 Child Care Vouchers
- 2 Career breaks and a re-entry scheme for all grades
- 3 A Carer/Family leave scheme.

Nine months later the Company are still costing it.

Each of the successor companies to the CEGB have now introduced paid assistance for child care.

electricity companies are undergoing reorganisations, yet it is only the Regional Electricity Companies that appear unable to commit resources to this important aspect of staff welfare.

The generating companies obviously recognise that these packages offer just as much benefit to the employers in recruiting and retaining trained, experienced staff.

All members are coming under increased pressure at work, workers who are carers have serious additional problems which could start to be addressed



The National Grid recently formulated, in consultation with the unions, an excellent package to include, improved maternity pay, extended leave, child care vouchers, options for part-time or job sharing arrangements and a keep in touch scheme for employees who leave for domestic reasons but may wish to return within five years.

All the newly privatised

by the company implementing the proposed package.

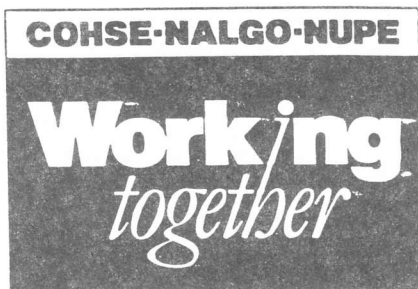
NALGO intends to keep this issue on the agenda. You can support us by regularly asking your representatives to Staff Committee and NALGO Branch Executive to raise the subject at their meetings.

Linda Ingram
Equal Opportunities
Secretary

...to the Equal Opportunities claim

1992 is a year of decision for NALGO members. The challenge is to create a New Union. Can we build a better Union than the one we have now? I genuinely believe we can.

NALGO's present organisation was developed against the background of developments immediately after the 2nd World War - the creation of the National Health Service, the nationalisation of major industries such as Electricity and Gas and the expansion of the duties of local Councils. Much has changed since then and new issues have developed such as Sex and Race Discrimination which organisations concerned with the promotion of fairness, democracy and equity must support. NALGO and its proposed partners have the promotion of those principles deeply ingrained in its culture. What could



be more natural, therefore, than to bring the organisations together particularly as they operate in substantially the same areas to give more force to the promotion of those principles.

branch finance in the New Union

EXISTING levels of funding to branches will be maintained the three unions have agreed in the negotiations.

Branches will continue to have control over a level of resources no less than at the present.

The three unions have agreed that the regulations of the New Union should rule out manipulation of funds.

And to meet the fears they have

agreed a system which will guarantee the speedy flow of funds to the branches backed by safeguards for the branches.

■ A strict timetable will govern the flow of funds.

■ If head office fails to meet it, all interest and bank charges will be carried by head office.

■ Branches will also have a permanent float should they want one.

■ An independent appeals committee will adjudicate on differences between a branch and head office.

Towards a NEW UNION

Well, it will be argued, that is all very well but I happen to work in Electricity will the New Union make things better for me and my fellow NALGO members. Yes! The New Union, because of major over-lapping in Health and Local Government, will be able to operate more efficiently than could ever be the case separately. Secondly, the resources released by the reduction in overlap will facilitate improved services generally and specifically to Electricity in support of developments like Company and local bargaining.

Moreover, in the New Union, Electricity will be guaranteed a seat on the National Executive Council and will have its own service Group Conference. These principles clearly indicate that the New Union is to be a partnership between all sections within it. It is not a question of relative size because the position of smaller sections is recognised and protected in the proposed constitution.

To be part of this change fills me with optimism for the future and the New Union. The strength of such a Union built on the principles outlined above and providing for a full leadership role for lay members will place us in the forefront of Trade Unionism in Western Europe. I look forward to talking to you about the New Union during 1992.

Keith Mann
District Officer
NALGO

New shop staff grades agreed

Following the discussions with Shop Operations Manager the following guidelines apply for new sales staff:

The policy for grading new sales assistants joining our Company is as follows:

- (1) All new starters will be started on an SG1 grade.
- (2) If a new starter has previous electrical retail experience they will be upgraded to SG3 subject to satisfactory performance after one year.
- (3) No previous experience of electrical retail prices will be upgraded to SG3 after two years satisfactory performance.

POLES . . .

SHARES

Whatever happened to the small shareholder? In less than 12 months 2/3rds of the original shareholders in the REC's have already sold their shares. 75% of shares in London Electricity are now held by institutions. And while most employees may make a few hundred pounds on their share offers, tucked away in the corner of the Company's Annual Report we find the special share offers made to the Chairman and Directors a trifle more lucrative. The basis of the Chairman's offer? ... within 3 years he will be a millionaire. What a nice little earner! Arthur Daley eat your heart out.

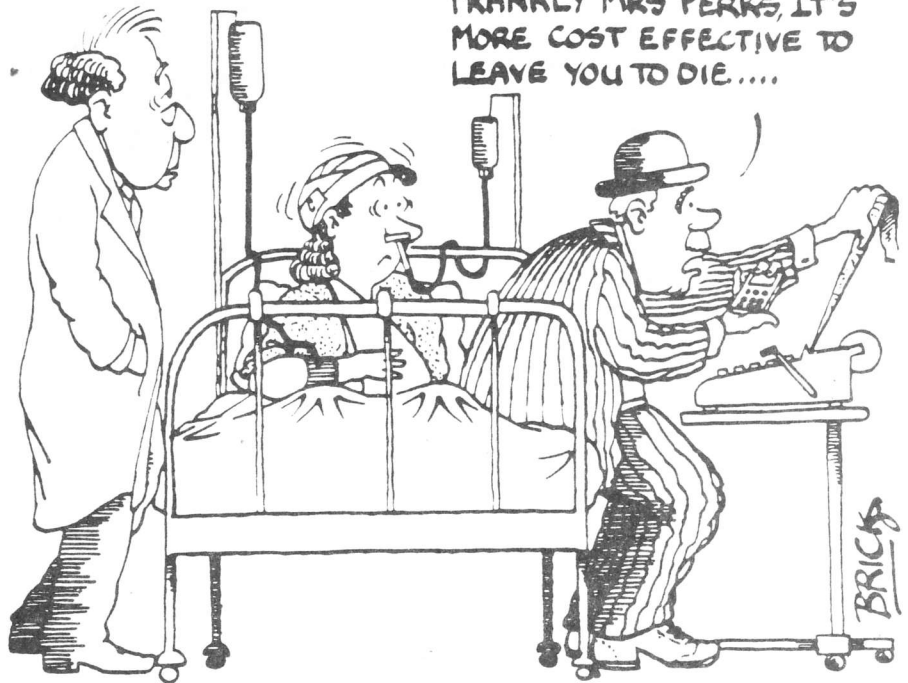
CARD METERS

30% reduction in consumers being cut off? Another success for privatisation? Well not quite, the introduction of card meters has quite simply transferred the responsibility to the customers. No money - no card, no card, no electricity. And best of all - no record!

... to add insult to injury, many customers are now having to pay extra to buy £3 electricity cards from certain outlets. The scandal of some of MANWEB's poorest customers having to pay £4 for a £3 electricity card means they are facing an increase in their bills of up to 30% for the crime of being poor. It's clear who's NOT benefitting from privatisation.

APART

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Health market doesn't work

THE GOVERNMENT'S continued attack on the health service has been deliberately obscured by complicated legislation.

The focus of attention was given to the establishment of hospital trusts. But the trusts are only part of the so-called reforms. The new act provided for health authorities to divide themselves into two parts - purchaser and provider.

An internal market was established in the health service. Market forces were to determine how health care would actually be provided.

This idea is a terrifying one. Market forces produce winners and losers. Some people - those with money and influence - are better placed to take advantage of a market.

★ Health care is now bought by district health authorities (DHAs) and some GPs in large group practices (with over 11,000 patients).

★ Health care is sold by NHS hospitals, opted-out and even private hospitals. All compete to sell their services.

★ Opted-out hospitals are no longer run by the DHA but by boards of directors, many of them businessmen. They are financed by winning contracts from the DHAs. They will have to make a profit - so they'll drop any services which aren't 'good business'.

If the market was fully in operation now hospitals would be forced to close. The undervalued and under-resourced community services would have collapsed already. But health service staff and patients haven't seen anything yet. If the Tories win the next election they will unleash the full ferocity of the market forces.

The losers will be the poor, the not-so-poor and not least the hard-pressed and exploited NHS staff.

Are you a Rep?

A number of vacancies still exist for reps on the Branch Executive Committee for Mid Cheshire, Clwyd Gwynedd, Aberystwyth and North Mersey. At the Head Office, where the Branch has now organised a constituency based stewards system, 10 stewards have been elected and several other members have indicated an interest. Do you know

who your steward or rep is? Ask for information, check for details on the union noticeboards. If you would like to play a role in your union contact your rep or the Branch Office.

--- MAKE YOUR UNION
WORK FOR YOU ---

The views and opinions expressed in LIVEWIRE are not necessarily those of the MANWEB NALGO Branch