

Armour By-Products Plant Signed by CIO Union

Negotiations Open for
Contract to Cover

Mail Factory

Workers 5 1/23/48

(Special to the Daily Worker)

CHICAGO, Jan. 22.—Officials of the Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee, CIO, announced today the conclusion of an agreement with Armour and Company, bitter foe of unionism, covering working conditions for approximately 1,000 workers in the company's Chicago by-products plant. Negotiations for an agreement for the 7,000 workers in Armour's main packing plant at the Union Stock Yards begins today.

Principal concessions made by the company involve seniority policy, long a major grievance of the Armour workers, and hours of work. The smashing at last the company's vicious policy of the "60-day break," under which veteran workers with many years of continued service have been robbed of their seniority rights, is being hailed by the workers as a major victory toward their goal of job security. Workers laid off or sick for 60 days automatically lost their seniority rights, including hard earned vacations. Under the new agreement service records cannot be broken unless the worker has been gone from the payroll a full year.

A guaranteed work week with the minimum set at 32 hours is another major achievement of the union. Overtime payment is to begin after an eight-hour day and forty-hour week.

The agreement, which has been certified by the U. S. Department of Labor, bears no expiration date, but can be reopened for further negotiations upon written notice.

DRIVE IN OTHER PLANTS

Herb March, youthful District Director of the PWOC in Chicago, expressed satisfaction at the important gains for the workers and pointed the way toward still greater achievements.

"We recognize," March said, "that this agreement cannot be considered complete until a general wage increase has been written into it. Although the union has won raises running into hundreds of thousands of dollars annually through adjustment of individual wage rates, we cannot be satisfied until the basic wages throughout the industry has been lifted far higher.

"With this goal in mind we are launching a vigorous campaign to complete the organization of the Chicago stock yards 100 per cent. The 3,000 workers of Wilson and Co. here in Chicago will go to the polls in a Labor Board election on Friday, Jan. 26.

"Following our victory in Wilson, which seems assured, every effort of the 14 PWOC local unions in Chicago will be spent in concentration upon the Swift and Co plants which are the only important plants in the stockyards not fully unionized. With Swift soon in the ranks of the PWOC we will be in a powerful position to press for the wage increases so much needed by the packinghouse workers."