LABOR RELATIONS—The period just ahead

Comments by top union officials who responded to CONSTRUCTION DIMENSIONS’ invitation to discuss the challenges facing the industry

“. . . the future relationship between labor and management cannot be one of mere rhetoric, but a very real and sincere commitment to cooperation and progress.” . . . S. Frank Raftery, General President, International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades

Renewed efforts throughout the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades to organize new work opportunities, as well as new members, fit closely with our nation’s current economic status. In seeking new work opportunities, we recognize the fact that we must remain flexible enough to compete with non-union contractors and at the same time maintain our wage rates, fringe benefits and working conditions.

Continued labor-management cooperation is essential if we are to protect ourselves and our industry. Residential housing and maintenance work represent only one area in which a united effort on the part of labor and management can make limitless gains. It is imperative that you, as union contractor association, actively pursue all phases of work coming under the Brotherhood’s jurisdiction so that our goal of a totally organized industry can be realized.

Two pieces of legislation currently before the U.S. Senate make the achieving of this goal even more timely, more inevitable. With the passage of situs picketing, union contractors will be bidding on a fair and equitable basis against other union contractors.

The collective bargaining bill, which has also been passed in the House of Representatives, gives added strength to the collective bargaining process. National and international unions will become more involved. The bill, which establishes a construction industry collective bargaining committee, applies solely to that segment of the construction industry where workers are represented by recognized unions.

In view of these current trends, in legislation and within the unions themselves, it is obvious that the future relationship between labor and management cannot be one of mere rhetoric, but a very real and sincere commitment to cooperation and progress.

Collective bargaining between labor and management is the key factor in making our economic system work. The profit motivated American economic system, i.e., the drive to maximize profits, left unbridled, would result in the rich steadily getting richer and the poor poorer, which in turn would result in human suffering, frustration, dissention and most likely, turmoil in the streets.

The collective bargaining process briddles the absolute maximizing of profits by negotiating minimum wage rates and working conditions, which labor and management accept as being fair in terms of compensation for labor’s services and management’s opportunity to earn a fair profit.

The collective bargaining process, being so vital to our American economy and our American way of life, places a tremendous responsibility upon the parties involved. All parties must be responsive to each others problems and to the industry’s problems. We must recognize that our industry does have problems, and that we, both labor

“The future of this industry will be only as good as we can make it.” . . . Kenneth M. Edwards, General President, Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers International Union

As general president of the Lathers International Union, it is a distinct pleasure to be a part of this edition devoted to labor relations.

Because of the ever-increasing complicities within the construction industry, the need for progressive and meaningful labor relations was never more evident.

Earlier this year, our interna-
process, being so vital to our American way of life, places a tremendous re-involved.” . . .

William E. Sidell, General President, Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

and management, are part of the problems, and therefore, we, labor and management, must find solutions to those problems.

Our current chaotic economic situation of continuing inflation and high unemployment will thoroughly test the collective bargaining process in the coming year. These circumstances require that the parties to the collective bargaining process approach their negotiations with commitment to the importance of the collective bargaining process, and with resolve to understand our mutual problems and to understand each others problems.

We now have an opportunity to bring about major changes in bargaining patterns in our industry. The Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Act of 1975, now moving through Congress, provides that opportunity. After a great deal of soul-searching, Laborers’ International Union has agreed to support this measure. Closely tied to this bill is the Equal Treatment for Craft and Industrial Workers bill. We have sought the support of contractors for this measure because we believe that legal clarification of situs picketing now will do as much as anything to end the confusion and chaos that punctuates labor relations in the industry. Adoption of these bills—in tandem—could translate the present fragmentation and confusion in our industry into a golden era for labor relations in the period just ahead.

“We must, by our joint actions, convince the public and private interests that now is the time to begin building to get the economy back on the move.” . . . Thomas F. Murphy, President, Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers International Union of America

Predicting the future of labor relations during the present period of high unemployment, high interest rates, tight money markets, limited construction activity and national, if not international, financial uncertainty is a risky if not downright foolish business. At the present time we find few economic forecasters painting rosy pictures for the immediate outlook in the construction industry.

Yet any of us that have been in this business for any length of time know that the construction industry has weathered more severe storms in the past. We have seen this segment of the country’s industrial economy bounce back with increased opportunities and enthusiasm.

I view the period ahead as a time to renew and revitalize the national bonds between labor unions and construction management in an effort to increase the work opportunities available to this industry.

“The challenge now, to both management and labor, is great. Vanquishing that challenge will mean an even greater reward: stability in our industry.” . . . Peter Fosco, Late General President, Laborers International Union of North America

December, 1975
iaWCC Endorses Lathers and Carpenters Merger

The iaWCC Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed a merger of the Wood, Wire, and Metal Lathers’ International Union with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

Talks about merger of the two Internationals are not something new. The members of iaWCC, in the Lawrence-Leiter survey of a few years ago voted by a majority of 84 percent in favor of the concept of merger of the two unions.

In the recent past, officials of the Lathers and Carpenters had been meeting on this and other subjects but these talks were suddenly broken off a number of months ago.

This past July, the iaWCC Carpenters’ Liaison Committee met with officials of that Union in New Hampshire and came to the conclusion that a proposal to the Lathers by the Carpenters was greatly to the advantage of the Lathers and that the Lathers should give strong consideration to accepting it.

This position was reported to the iaWCC Executive Committee which voted to request the iaWCC Lathers’ Liaison Committee to meet with officials of the WW&MLIU to get that International’s side of the picture.

This was done and since that time several meetings with their respective union counterparts have been held by the Lathers’ and Carpenters’ Liaison Committees of iaWCC.

The offer made by the Carpenters follows:

Within the Lathers Union, the Carpenters agreed to continue employment for all Lathers’ officials on the international level; and, on the local level, where a paid business agent can be supported by his local union, to continue that agent’s position. Where a local cannot support a full-time, paid B.A., an attempt to merge several Lathers’ locals would be made; and, barring this, then the Lathers in an area where a paid B.A. cannot be supported would be serviced by the business agent of the Carpenters’ local in their area.

For the members of the Lathers’ Union, the Carpenters have agreed that all Lathers would become members of the Carpenters’ International and their appropriate local without payment of an initiation fee. Once members of the Carpenters’ Union, these Lathers would be allowed to perform all work for which they are qualified now being performed by Carpenters. Current members of the Carpenters’ Union, after merger, would not be allowed to perform any work considered to be “traditional lathing”, where there are Lathers to man the job(s).

LABOR FUTURE

“. . . mutual interests will cause a continuation of our sincere and honest approach to labor relations . . .” Joseph T. Power, General President, Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ International Association.

The Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ International Association this year is observing one hundred eleven (111) years of continuous existence as an organization that has represented plasterers as artisans and craftsmen throughout that entire period. During this same period there also existed organizations that locally and sometimes nationally represented the employers of plasterers. There are some records of collective bargaining agreements back as far as 1825 on a local basis. There is further evidence of many other meetings between men in the plastering industry representing management and labor, most of which were held in an amicable manner and resulted (Continued on Page 28)
MURPHY: (Continued from Page 27)

she began taking night courses in law as preparation for a possible assignment to cover the Supreme court.

When she was assigned to another regular beat, she decided to become a lawyer, finishing the three years of study in two and a half. Of 14 job offers from government and from private firms, she chose the National Labor Relations Board.

The challenge of that work convinced her to specialize in labor law and later, in private practice with a Washington, D.C. law firm she was an active trial lawyer, trying cases or appearing in Federal or State Courts in 19 states. She presented arguments before nine of the 11 United States Courts of Appeals.

Married to the noted Veterans Administration radiologist, Dr. Cornelius F. Murphy, the chairman and her husband live in Annandale, a Virginia suburb of Washington, with their two children, Ann, 7, and Neil, 6.

Though she has a limousine as a Washington agency head, Mrs. Murphy chooses not to have it pick her up at home. She prefers riding to work with her husband, like thousands of other wives.

And once at work, she presides with easy confidence over an agency whose decisions can have extraordinary impact on American working life.

“When I received the nomination for this job,” she said, “Lane Kirkland, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO told me, ‘Betty, when you become chairman forget you ever represented a union. And forget you ever represented an employer.

LABOR (continued)
in understandings of mutual benefit.

We believe that as an organization, we have through our sincere approach in labor relations, gained the faith and confidence of all we have come in contact with including those who have employed our labor. We assume the same right to claim consideration as any other institution because the handiwork and craftsmanship of the members of our organization, with the cooperation of our employers, have left traces of beauty and splendor in structures of every description throughout the American continent.

Most business institutions and organizations take great pride in informing the public of their early existence, because an industry is generally measured by its years of success, indicating a reputation for honesty and sincerity in serving its clients.

While we are uncertain as to the future of Labor relations because of proposed federal labor legislation, we can assure all concerned in the plastering industry we will continue to serve the public in preserving, performing and improving the work of plastering, plain or ornamental, in all types of structures, in order to safeguard the health, welfare and lives of our people. We feel certain that our mutual-interests will cause a continuation of our sincere and honest approach to labor relations no matter what course we must lawfully follow.