

Steelmen Ready To Strike Sept. 1, Reject Offer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The United Steelworkers union, voting it was ready to strike the nation's steel mills Sept. 1, rejected Wednesday an offer the industry said would raise wages and benefits by 40 cents an hour over the next three years.

Union president I.W. Abel estimated the industry offer would raise wages by 40 cents an hour and benefits by 4 cents an hour over the next three years.

Rejection of the offer came more than 48 hours after President Johnson, in a televised news conference, tied the critical steel situation to the war in Viet Nam. He urged "full and complete

responsibility in current wage negotiations."

Abel and R. Conrad Cooper, chief industry negotiator, said they had scheduled no meetings, but would remain available.

William E. Blunkin, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service who is trying for the second time in four months to avert a nationwide strike, called both sides together for his first joint meeting with them at 2 p.m. Thursday.

"The differences that now exist between the parties should not be minimized but enough time remains for settlement prior to the Sept. 1 deadline," he said.

If no settlement is reached, the industry probably will start the costly shutdown process this weekend. The 450 workers who are responsible for 80 per cent of the nation's steel output, will be free to strike at midnight next Tuesday.

Cooper announced the latest industry offer as a news conference held simultaneously with a meeting of the union's 23-member International Executive Board.

Abel said negotiators rejected the offer Tuesday but Cooper said he was still awaiting the decision of the union directors.

The industry estimated its offer would raise employment

costs by three per cent, included were provisions to increase wages by 10 to 21 cents an hour in the first year and six cents in the third year. It also included improvements in insurance and pensions. Steelworkers now average \$4.40 an hour, including benefits.

Abel said the union figured the industry offer at 2.3 per cent which he said compared to a 7.8 per cent wage and benefit increase the steelworkers won in an interim contract that Blunkin helped work out last April.

Abel said the industry package amounted to 3.8 cents. He said the union wanted 53 cents.

At Least 10 Killed As Blasts, Fires Sweep Louisville Plant

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The shattered Du Pont synthetic rubber plant, flaming and smoke-filled by 24 blasts Wednesday, was rocked by two more explosions Wednesday night as rescue workers were removing bodies of 10 men.

At least three men — believed firemen — were removed by ambulance as rescue workers withdrew from the scene again.

There was an unconfirmed report from a Du Pont lab technician that some men were trapped by the new explosions.

It was not known how many rescue workers had entered the plant since the first blast Wednesday night. The blasts Wednesday night

were about five minutes apart. Earlier, Jefferson County (Louisville) police told of discovering the bodies in the plant where the earlier blasts had taken place. A "fury" that seemed "like hell" broke loose.

Names of the dead were not determined immediately.

At least 24 were injured. There was no immediate damage estimate. A fire spawned by the blasts will burn unchecked until Thursday, officials said.

Fear that a 150-ton acetylene gas tank might explode held firemen at bay for about eight hours. They waited about 15 miles from the plant, situated in Louisville's industrial complex called "Rubbertown," until a volunteer team entered to cool the tank.

Firemen said they believed some windows across the Ohio River in Indiana.

Unending clouds of black smoke churned from the hole caused at the plant which has heard for miles and shattered produced Neoprene — a synthetic

rubber — since 1948 on round-the-clock shifts.

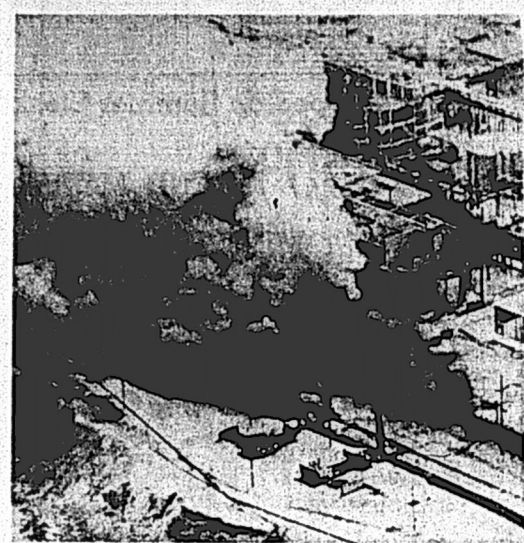
Helicopters carrying company and fire officials made frequent trips over the plant to check on the progress of the fire.

Continued on Page 8; 7th Col.

Associated Press Wirephoto

Smoke Pours From Plant

Smoke fills the sky over the Du Pont synthetic rubber plant in Louisville, Ky., Wednesday following more than a score of explosions that ripped through the installation.



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President Gives Go-Ahead On Manned Orbiting Lab

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Johnson gave the go-ahead Wednesday for a new \$1.5-billion U.S. venture in space, a Manned Orbiting Laboratory—MOL, that will have military potential.

Johnson also described the Gemini 5 flight as "a dramatic reminder that our American dream for outer space is a dream of peace," and he invited

U.S. Casualties Hit New High In Viet War

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP) — U.S. military headquarters disclosed Wednesday that 100 Americans were killed in action in Viet Nam last week. The U.S. toll, which included losses in the conquest of the Van Thong peninsula, was the highest in any seven-day period of the war.

The roll of American combat deaths since 1961 rose to 620. Viet Nam's government forces were reported to have lost less than 100, 120 dead, that week of increasing American involvement.

A total of 1,010 Viet Cong were reported killed, including 329 confirmed dead at Van Tuong. This was down slightly from a count of 1,130 the week before, the record for enemy casualties.

The previous high in American combat deaths was in the second week of February, when the Viet Cong killed 35. The record average has been about 15 a week.

The statistics came out as a U.S. spokesman reported the loss of a third American plane to what appeared to be a surface-to-air missile over North Viet Nam, this time about 90 miles south of Hanoi.

A U.S. Navy Phantom jet from the carrier Midway was the victim, blasted to earth while flying support for an armed reconnaissance mission. The plane is outside the range of Viet missile sites ranging from Hanoi and it seemed likely the firing was done by a mobile launcher. The spokesman said a parachute of one of the two crewmen was seen, but search and rescue

Cramped, Itchy Astronauts To Top Reds' Mark Today

MANNED SPACE CENTER, Houston, Tex. (AP) — Gemini 5's cramped and somewhat itchy astronauts, with the U.S. record tucked away, Wednesday topped the five-day mark as the longest flight in space.

Charles Cooper Jr. and Charles (Pete) Conrad Jr. set a U.S. mark at 10:58 a.m. EST. But the goal is breaking the Soviet record — they should do that at 9:06 a.m. EDT on Thursday, and then set for a total of 121 orbits and eight days in space.

At 8:36 p.m. EDT they had completed 67 orbits.

The U.S. record, set by astronaut James A. McDivitt and Edward H. White II on their walk-in-space flight in June, fell as the Gemini 3 was going over New Guinea on its 62nd trip around the world.

Appropriately, the record-breaking news came from an astronaut whose record was better.

Cheap Feed OK For 15 Maine Drought Areas

By MAY CRAIG

WASHINGTON — Farmers in 15 Maine counties who have been hurt by the drought will be sold government feed grain at reduced prices, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman announced Wednesday.

Feedstock is the only county in Maine not included in the offer by Freeman. Sen. Edmund S. Muskie and Rep. William D. Hathaway said in a joint announcement.

They said that shortages of hay and roughage, including silage, are critical in these counties because of the prolonged drought.

Hay, normally available from Canada, also is scarce due to the drought.

The 15 counties also were offered grazing privileges on retired or diverted crop lands.

The drought in Maine has continued through three years. Under severe drought conditions the secretary of agriculture is authorized by law to make available credit corporation owned feed to sheep, goat and dairy farmers at not less than 75 per cent of the feed market price and for other eligible livestock at 100 per cent of the supported price.

The government-owned feed grain, as available, will be offered under the program through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service which are charged with the responsibility for determining eligibility of producers for assistance.

House Passes Bill To End Nat'l. Origins Immigration

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bill that would scrap the national origins immigration system that has guided U.S. policy for 41 years was passed overwhelmingly Wednesday night by the House.

The vote was 318-95.

Acting shortly after a plea from President Johnson to remove what he termed the "prejudicial" restrictions in the law, the House sent the bill to the Senate, where it faces tougher opposition.

Johnson discussed the Senate's legislative schedule at the White House late Wednesday with Democratic Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana and Republican Leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois.

Dirksen told reporters afterwards the "emphasis was on the

Reed Urges President Lift Ban On Canadian Labor

REED IN HIS TELEGRAM TO JOHNSON SAID:

"The critical shortage of labor for the apple harvest threatens economic hardship to Maine orchardists. Intense recruitment for domestic labor has produced disappointing results.

"Certification of Canadian labor for this work would greatly ease the situation if done immediately. Urgently request your recommendation to approval to Secretary Wirtz."

The Department of Labor's position is that it will not permit the entrance of Canadian workers until it is convinced that there are not sufficient domestic workers.

Tupper and Morse attended a meeting Wednesday of New England senators and representatives and apple growers of these states.

"Unless something is done very soon," they told the President, "we fear much of the crop will be lost. We hope that you will recommend to expedite the resolution of this grave problem before it is too late."

Today's Chuckle

Some foreign countries are considering placing a tax on American tourists—possibly another way of trying to make them feel at home.

Lewiston Man Dies In 30-Foot Fall At School

MADISON (AP) — A 60-year-old Lewiston man was killed here late Wednesday afternoon when a slating at the junior high school broke, plunging him 30 feet to the ground.

Fernand Levesque of 7 Ralph Ave. was pronounced dead at the scene by Dr. Ernest Stein of Pittsfield, a Somerset County medical examiner. The deceased suffered a fractured skull.

Also on the slating was John Mauro, 19, of 4 Russell St. Lewiston. He was taken to Redington Memorial Hospital in Bowdoin for treatment by Dr. Harland Turner and was later transferred to a Lewiston hospital. The extent of his injuries was not known.

Continued on Page 8; 3rd Col.

MAC Favors State-U.S. Portland Airport Financing

AUGUSTA (AP) — The Maine Aeronautics Commission said Wednesday it will support the past practice and favor state-financed financing for Portland Municipal Airport improvement, with no city sharing required except that already approved.

Gov. Reed asked the commission Tuesday to prepare airport improvement plans for Portland. He also asked for a special legislative session in the next few months, but the commission said Wednesday it has long

News, Features On The Inside

The Weather
Cloudy, showers today; fair, mild Friday.
Full report on Page 66.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY says he has no intention of running for vice president in 1968 or of seeking the presidency in 1972 and wants to keep his Senate seat. Page 2.

Novel Gym -- Field House

The Hinckley School's bubble top gymnasium-field house which resembles the Telstar Satellite earth station at Andover, was inflated into place Wednesday in less than a half hour. The bubble top, made of fibreglass and nylon fabric, is designed to withstand winds of 150 m.p.h. The facility is named for Charles F. Nutter.

Prayer For Today

Forgive us, Father, that we have too often forgotten whence cometh our help. All power is Thine. Thou hast entered into Thine strength with us, and we have foolishly tried to other our lives without Thy aid. Our sins with us have driven us into strange and dangerous ways, for we have trusted in the flesh. Save us from our error, which is our dreadful weakness. Grant us to seek in humility. Thy redemptive power; in Jesus' name. Amen.

— Rev. Frank Hastings, Methuen, Evangelist (United Methodist Church).

Strange Hat Theater

"DEEP WATERS"

A salty drama about a small Maine town laborer sharing

DANA ANDREWS
JEAN PETERS
9:30 P.M.
Channel 13

Classified	Editorials	32	Landers	15	Television	10
41-43	Financial	40	Letourneau	31	Theaters	8
Creating	Goets	28	Clery	23	Town, City	21
House	33	Living In	News	26, 31		
Comics	33	Helen	31	Maine	31	Women's
Crowdrow	30	Horseshoe	38	Party Line	33	Page
Deaths	41	Jump	18	Sports	18, 36	