

Employees Will No Longer Have To Wear 'Dehumanizing' Stenomasks

A number of secretaries who work as hearings reporters for the Workmen's Compensation Board in Salem will no longer be required to wear "stenomasks" to record hearings.

That decision was made by the agency following a request by OSEA that the new recording devices not be used, and after a period of evaluation by the WCB showed they did not work well in recording the agency's hearings.

Shortly after the agency began using the stenomasks on a trial basis, several of the secretaries complained about them to OSEA Field Representative Donald F. Larkin. He attended some of the training sessions and interviewed the secretaries before bringing the complaints to the attention of R.J. Chance WCB's director.

The stenomask "resembles an inverted bullhorn, into which the hearings reporter speaks and records the proceedings," Larkin told Chance. "Neither myself nor the six secretaries who use this apparatus has been able to comment more ably on it than the agency's medical director, Dr. Rolland A. Martin, M.D., who terms it 'dehumanizing' and 'ridiculous.'"

Larkin pointed out that nearly all of the secretaries complained of difficulty in breathing

while recording into stenomasks. He said several of them "experienced drowsiness engendered by poor ventilation of carbon monoxide."

N.L. Whisenant, personnel officer for the agency, told Larkin that the stenomasks were used on a trial basis because of the difficulties the agency was having with its older recording equipment.

"Our investigations, inquiries and experiences have led us to the decision to seek other alternatives," he said, because the stenomasks do "not adapt well to the peculiarities of an adversary hearing."

Improving PERS Subject of Confab

The Oregon Public Employees' Retirement Conference will hold a meeting on Saturday, November 25, to adopt its proposed 1973 legislative program.

The program recommends internal changes in the Public Employees' Retirement System and improvement of pension benefits.

The meeting will be held in OSEA's new headquarters building starting at 9:00 a.m. There is a \$1.25 registration fee for those who want lunch.

UO Plumbers Vote OSEA

University of Oregon Plumbing Shop employees voted out an AFL-CIO affiliated union and voted in OSEA as their collective bargaining representative in a recent election held in Eugene.

OSEA received 9 votes; Local 481 of the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union got 2 votes and one vote was cast for no representation. There are 14 employees in the unit.

The Association requested the Public Employee Relations Board to hold an election after it received petitions signed by 11 employees stating they no longer wanted to be represented by Local 481, but preferred to be represented by OSEA.

Local 481 has represented the unit since it was created several years ago.

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