His only offense was going to the 'union'

COOS BAY -- Management apparently will go to any lengths in its campaign of "union busting," and the employment and the rights of an individual employe will not stand in its way.

Charles Negus started work as a laborer 1 with the state Forestry Department on Dec. 16, 1976. At that time, he was told that he would have three weeks to bring his work up to standard for the tree planting he was assigned to do.

The next day, the crew he was assigned to was given the customary morning break and a noon lunch break.

On the next working day, Negus was assigned to a different crew which worked with only a five minute break at about 12:25 p.m. He never was given a meal break. About 3 p.m., Negus, against the directions of his supervisor, stopped work in order to eat. At that time, the rest of the crew stopped to eat lunch and no tree planting was done after the meal.

At the end of that work day, Negus was told he would have only three days to get his work up to standard, instead of the three weeks he originally was afforded to learn the job.

On Dec. 21, Negus was ill and could not work and he called OSEA District Director Jim Shumway about the lack of sufficient rest and lunch breaks. Shumway contacted the Forestry Department on Negus' behalf.

The day Negus returned to work after being ill, his supervisor gave a speech to the crew about his being contacted by the "union," pointing to Negus as the "one who started all this" and as the one who went to the union. The supervisor then ordered Negus to take a one-hour lunch break at noon regardless of what the rest of the crew did. The rest of the crew voted not to take a lunch break. That day, Negus took his lunch break and still managed to plant 400 trees, the crew average.

The next day, Negus was assigned to another crew and planted only 20 fewer trees than the crew average. At the end of the day, he was given notice of suspension and removal from employment. The suspension has since been withdrawn, but he still has been fired.

Negus clearly has been fired for coming to OSEA and for insisting on his rest and lunch breaks which, not only are necessary for good health, are required by law, past practices and the contract.

The Forestry Department clearly has retaliated against Negus for coming to OSEA to enforce his rights. The Forestry Department is attempting to interfere with OSEA's enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement, resolve grievances and complaints of bargaining unit employes by firing those who contact their union with complaints about working conditions.

In doing so, it clearly is violating state law by discharging him for his participation in OSEA.

Because of this, OSEA General Counsel John Irvin has filed an unfair labor practice charge with the Employment Relations Board. That charge asks the board to set aside Negus' removal from his job, to order the Forestry Department to pay Negus all of his back pay and benefits from the time he was discharged and to order the Forestry Department to stop this sort of violation of the contract and the law and to quit harassing its employes.

OSEA President Kinns talks with Larry Oglesby, Rebecca Yoder, Kathy Stevens and Alan Scott from Chemeketa.

Scholars wanted for OSEA financial aid

Plans for a college education begin early.

With that in mind, now is the time for chapters to send in their contributions to the OSEA Financial Aid Program and to get the word out to interested students.

OSEA members may nominate themselves, another OSEA member or a relative of an OSEA member for financial aid. However, each chapter which nominates a student for financial aid must contribute to the program.

Since each financial aid grant is $300, the more money there is in the program, the more grants can be distributed.

Five certification forms, along with an information sheet, have been mailed to each chapter president. More are available from headquarters.

Board charters two local employe groups

OSEA membership rolls were boosted by 121 with the addition of classified employes from Chemeketa Community College in Salem and sheriff's deputies from Lincoln County.

The OSEA Board of Directors granted chapter charters to these two groups at its Jan. 8 meeting.

Both have contracts in force. OSEA will take over the administration of those contracts and negotiate new ones when they expire.

The interest in OSEA affiliation in each case came from the public employes themselves. Both felt they needed to be a part of a stronger organization with a professional staff capable of assuming the duties of contract enforcement and capable of providing professional assistance at the bargaining table.

Other local government employe associations are showing the same interest in becoming a part of OSEA. The Association leadership is deliberately taking each application for affiliation on a case-by-case basis. At the request of the local organization, however, various staff members have been speaking to local government associations telling them about OSEA, its staff, its organization and its services.

'No rehire' notation removed from rating

COOS BAY -- Virginia Pollock was a clerical assistant for the Vocational Rehabilitation Division when she decided to transfer to another agency. On her final performance evaluation, management said she was not to be rehired.

This action was taken without any prior indication to Pollock that she had shown any deficiencies in her job performance and a subsequent investigation by OSEA Employe Representative Gordon Webb showed that there were none. Her final merit rating was a "C".

Webb filed a grievance on her behalf to have the "No rehire" statement removed because there was no justification for it and nothing in her personnel file indicated she had been told she was not meeting the expectations of her job.

Donald Wahl, the personnel manager of Vocational Rehabilitation, stood by his action, so Webb appealed the grievance to George Sanders, grievance coordinator in the Personnel Division, who had it removed from her final evaluation form.