cation and prodding worked in Chicago during World War II.

It all began when management called the union executive board (which also served as a bargaining committee) into the plant manager's office to report that the Urban League was pressing the company to hire Negro installers. "We told them we couldn't do it," the plant manager firmly declared. "We know your union members would refuse to work with Negroes. And besides, we're not going to put up separate facilities for Negro workers."

The company was in for a shock.

"Who said you could speak for us?" asked the union committee. "We don't object to working with Negroes. The Negro janitors are in our union, and if you hire Negro installers, we'll work with them too. What's more, you don't have to put up separate facilities. We can all use the same."

Arrangements were made to hire a limited number of Negroes as phone installers, giving first crack to Negroes already employed as janitors and porters. But despite this sensible agreement between the union executive board and management, a rank and file revolt started. At the next membership meeting, one member after another condemned the board's action. A committee was picked to see the plant manager and protest the hiring of Negroes.

"I'm sorry," replied the manager, "but this agreement was worked out with your board. It stands."

The rank and file committee reported back to the membership:

"The board sold us down the river. Maybe we can't keep those Negroes out of the plant, but we *can* keep them out of the union."

The next month, after a number of Negro installers came on the job, the opposition members had a new idea:

"Look," they said, "we have to pay out good money to support our union. Why should those Negroes be free-riders and get the benefit of all our gains without paying

a cent? They've *got* to join the union and pay dues. But we won't let them come to union meetings."

Another month and another membership meeting later, the rebels changed their tune again:

"*We* have to come to meetings to build up the union. Why should the Negroes go to the movies while we're attending union meetings? *They've* got to come to meetings too—but they'll have to sit in a separate section."

You guessed it.

Before long, Negro phone workers were coming to union meetings, sitting with the other unionists, taking full part in all activities. But it didn't just happen.

In the long weeks between meetings, countless talks among union leaders, shop stewards and rank and filers paved the way for the change.

Scenes like those have been enacted over and over again in phone workers locals from Michigan to Texas. Sometimes the workers involved were Negroes; sometimes they were Spanish Americans. In most every case equality became the rule.

Now, Negroes entering telephone company employment as porters get a chance to try out for technical jobs. In Chicago, where Negro installers were employed for the first time in 1942, their number has grown rapidly. In New York, communications companies now place "help wanted" ads in Jewish, Chinese, and Negro papers, as well as in the general press. The greatest resistance centered on the hiring of Negro telephone operators. Until 1943, hardly a single colored operator was to be found in the entire Bell system.

Although the phone union—the Communications Workers of America—has done much to smooth the way, progress in certain sections of the country has been slow. In 1948, LaRoy Purdy, then CWA Director of the Mountain States District, was elected to the Colorado State Senate. It was he who introduced the State's first Fair Employment Prac-