In Case of Insomnia—Inscomm

AWAKE

The following letter was addressed originally to the Editor of The Tech Globe. To the Editor:

This letter is written to you by the Student Government of AWARE, a group which is attempting to organize the office workers at MIT. We read the editorial column written by Michael Amara in the October 2 and the subsequent reply of Maria Kivisild, Director of Personnel Services at MIT. We feel that a response is necessary to clarify the feelings of employees who are directly affected by the statements of Mr. Culliton.

Mr. Culliton, in attempting to rebut Amara's statement that a clerical worker at MIT can earn as little as $8 per week, states that none of MIT's 1,000 full-time clerical employees are classified as Grade 1. If Mr. Culliton is correct, we are led to ask the obvious question: why the job classification still "on the books"? We suspect that there are some employees who fall into this job category and therefore may receive gross salaries as low as $8 per week.

Culliton states that clerical salaries at MIT are competitive with others in the Boston area. He fails to mention that clerical pay in Boston is almost the lowest in the nation. In reality, and according to the actual data, the clerical employees' pay is rather low. Furthermore, many of these employees have been working at MIT for over 25 years. Since 1945, tuition has risen faster than the Consumer Price Index over the same period of time. With reference to research contracts, we would like to make the following points: many research contracts work on a "pass through" arrangement. It is the responsibility of the research agency to make sure that the employees are fairly reimbursed. Because of the importance of MIT's scientific research, MIT is granted millions of dollars in research money by the federal government, and it is largely through this arrangement that the employee is paid.

Culliton's letter mentions a future review of the merit system at MIT. Our Grievance Committee has been collecting information on grievances and the evidence seems to indicate that the Student Government Committee has been collecting information on grievances and the evidence seems to indicate that. He refers to the "40% of office workers who received a less than merit increment, contingent upon a good evaluation at the end of their first four months at MIT." For the employees in this group, it might interest Mr. Culliton to know that most of our employees have come from these people, many of whom did not receive a review or a salary increase and didn't even know that they were entitled to one. Also, many employees who asked for an increase other than the April Review often their first year of employment were told that this was "not common practice" at MIT, and that in order to obtain a salary increase, it was necessary to be promoted to a higher grade of office worker. This promotional process is very often arbitrary based on the employer's judgment about the employee, and often time-consuming, involving a personnel representative who probably has no contact with the employee even though he was hired.

It is important to mention that the office workers at MIT have not been represented by MIT. The employees who are directly affected by the salary have not had any input into these procedures. We feel that they are entitled to a personnel representative who probably has no contact with the employee even though he was hired.

The purpose of this letter is to inform the employees of MIT that they are entitled to a personnel representative who probably has no contact with the employee even though he was hired.