

New Labor Bill On Way To White House

The 96-page Taft-Hartley labor bill, which has been endorsed by House-Senate conferees and which shortly goes to the White House for signature—or veto—is divided into three major sections.

One section prescribes the machinery for use in the event of what are called "national emergency strikes," removes the Conciliation Service from the Department of Labor, making it a separate agency.

A second section provides for suits against labor unions for violation of contract.

The third has the effect of amending the Wagner Act for the first time since its passage 12 years ago. The purpose of the amendments is stated to be to balance more evenly the rights and responsibilities of both unions and management.

Two titles of lesser importance contain definitions of terms and provisions establishing a congressional committee to undertake several months of study of labor relations.

Following is a summary of the main provisions of the bill as it will go to President Truman:

National Emergencies—The President is authorized to instruct the Attorney General to obtain a Federal

injunction against a threatened strike in a key industry that would imperil the national health and safety. The injunction can remain in force for 90 days, during which period Government agencies seek to settle the dispute and a board of inquiry reports on the facts.

At the end, employees must vote on whether to accept their employer's "final" offer. If they reject it, the injunction must be removed and a strike may take place.

Suits against unions—Unions may be sued by private individuals in the federal courts for breach of contract. Further, employers may sue unions for damages they sustain in jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts.

Political contributions—Unions are not allowed to contribute to political campaigns, including primaries. Neither may they make expenditures for their own action in national political campaigns. The penalties include fines and imprisonment of union officers involved.

Federal workers' strikes—Government employees may not strike. The penalty is immediate discharge, forfeiture of Civil Service status, and prohibition against re-employment in

the Government for five years. **Closed shop**—Closed-shop contracts—providing that the employee must be a member of a union before he can be hired—are banned.

Union shop—Union shop contracts—providing that a member need not be a union member to obtain a job, but must become one soon after—are permitted. A majority of all employees in the unit involved must vote in favor of such a contract, by secret ballot.

Unfair labor practices—Hitherto "unfair labor practices" were actually "unfair employer practices," because all of those mentioned in the Wagner Act related to undesirable actions by employers.

The new bill adds a list of acts

which employees may not commit. They may not refuse to bargain in good faith; may not coerce or restrain other employees in the free exercise of their bargaining rights; may not charge "excessive or discriminatory" union initiation fees or dues, and may not coerce an employer in his choice of bargaining representatives.

This last provision is to stop unions from forcing an employer to bargain through an industry-wide or regional association of employers if he does not want to.

The National Labor Relations Board can issue a cease-and-desist order against anyone, employer or employee, committing an unfair labor practice. If it is disobeyed, it

can be enforced by a court order, which subjects a continuing violator to contempt-of-court proceedings.

Illegal strikes—Jurisdictional disputes, strikes to obtain recognition of a union contrary to, or in the absence of, an NLRB certification, secondary boycotts, and strikes to force an employer to pay for work not done ("feather bedding") are illegal.

Foremen—Supervisory employees and foremen are excluded from the benefits of the Wagner Act.

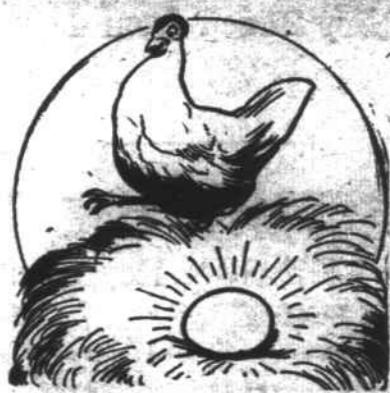
Professional and craft employees—Professional worker and members of a particular craft have a choice, decided on by majority vote, of whether to be represented by a plant-wide (industrial) union, or whether by their own union, or by neither.

Welfare funds—Employers may not contribute to union health, vacation, insurance, and other sorts of welfare funds unless those funds are set up so as to give both union and employer an equal voice in their administration.

The section exempts funds set up before Jan. 1, 1946. Thus, union-controlled funds in the garment trades and elsewhere could continue

as they are. **Communist**—Employees need not deal with any union, nor may the NLRB certify such union if handle

is not a member of either Communist Party.



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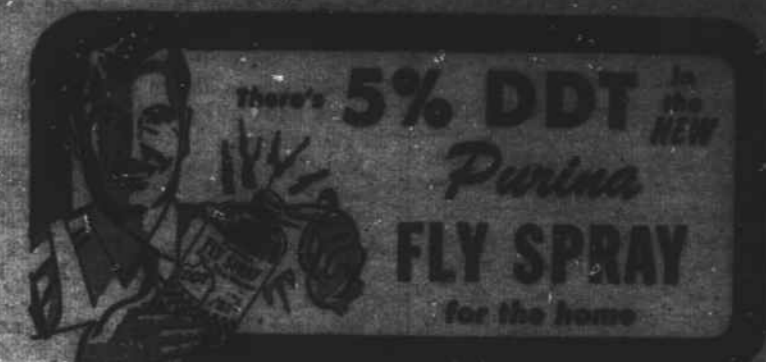
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