

Congress Prepares To Shelve Truman Strike-Control Bill

MEMBERS RELUCTANT TO VOTE VAST POWER IN AN ELECTION YEAR

Washington, D. C.—Barring an unforeseen outbreak of strikes Congress will shelve President Truman's emergency strike-control bill.

Chairman Adolph J. Sabath, chairman of the House Rules Committee, which is now considering Senate amendments to the measure, announced he favors "laying it aside" indefinitely, because "everything is calm and peaceful now."

Speaker Rayburn followed up this declaration by informing newsmen that "there are a lot of people—both Democrats and Republicans—who want to do nothing with the President's legislation."

His statement confirmed earlier reports that many members of Congress, who voted for the bill during the excitement of the railroad strike, have decided after calmer consideration that the bill places too great powers in the hands of the President.

While the President's bill is temporary in scope and affects only strikes in plants after they have been seized by the Federal Government, it contains severe penalties against labor and revives court injunctions against unions.

Meanwhile, the House Labor Committee, in an attempt to forestall a legislative probe of labor conditions by a hostile and prejudiced group headed by the perennial labor-hater, Rep. Howard Smith of Virginia, named a subcommittee to conduct wide-open public hearings on the subject.

AFL President William Green accepted an invitation from the chairman of the subcommittee, Rep. Augustine B. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to testify at the public hearing, June 25.

Mr. Kelley emphasized that the committee had no specific legislation in mind and is merely investigating to find out what, if anything, should be done to improve labor-management relations in the Nation.

Expressing doubt that any long-range labor legislation could be enacted at this session of Congress, Rep. Kelley said the hearings would be largely preliminary groundwork for action next year.

Representatives of business groups have been invited to testify, as well as labor leaders, the committee announced.

For the most part, members of Congress appeared relieved at the prospect that no anti-labor legislation will be enacted before adjournment next month. All members of the House and one-third of the Senate members came up for re-election this Fall and a large number of them feared that their votes on labor legislation, no matter which way they swung, might embarrass them in their campaigns.

In the current rush toward adjournment, the most vital legislation affecting labor is the OPA Extension Bill. This measure is now being considered by a Conference Committee, representing both Houses of Congress, which is trying to reach a compromise on differing provisions in the House and Senate versions of the legislation.

From labor's point of view, both the House and Senate Bills were extremely bad because, while they extended the life of OPA, they crippled its functions and made a mockery of effective price control.

It is freely being predicted in Washington that President Truman is prepared to veto the OPA Bill unless the crippling amendments are eliminated. Economic Stabilization Director Bowles described the cost-plus-guaranteed profit provision in the bill as a "time bomb" under price control and made clear he will resign if his hands are tied by such legislation.

Labor leaders predicted the cost of living may shoot up another 50 per cent and lead to widespread strikes unless OPA is given a clear mandate by Congress to keep the lid on prices effectively for another year.

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LAW CAN'T BAN STRIKES IN DEMOCRACY, TAFT SAYS

Tamiment, Pa.—Warning that "strikes cannot be prohibited without interfering with the basic freedom essential to our form of government" was sounded by Senator Taft, of Ohio, who took sharp issue with Administration labor policies.

Addressing the 12th annual Tamiment Social and Economic Institute, conducted by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (AFL), the Ohioian declared:

"A democratic government cannot prohibit strikes and remain a democratic government."

Leaders of labor, management and government attended the four-day conference here to discuss "The Road to Industrial Peace."

NAM Rejects House Bid To Labor Probe

Washington, D. C.—Betraying its fear of an honest inquiry into the real causes of labor disputes, the National Association of Manufacturers rejected an invitation to testify at public hearings of the House Labor committee.

In an attempt to evade the issue, the NAM declared it did not believe further Congressional studies necessary and urged immediate passage of anti-labor legislation.

This is a direct contradiction of the stand taken by President Truman in his veto message on the Case Bill. The President in that message repeated his recommendation for a six-months' study by Congress into the causes of labor disputes before any action is taken on legislation to minimize such disputes.

Representative Kelley (D., Pa.), chairman of the labor subcommittee considering the investigation, wrote to Walter B. Weisenberger, NAM executive vice president, saying:

"The subcommittee dislikes to bring a charge of contempt against the National Association of Manufacturers and hopes your decision may be reconsidered."

AFL President William Green has accepted the committee's invitation to testify and will appear at a public hearing within a few days.

Mr. Green made it clear that labor has nothing to fear from an open and fair inquiry into the causes of labor disputes. He emphasized that it would be impossible for Congress to act intelligently in the matter until it determined by careful investigation why such disputes start. As the Executive Council of the AFL said in a declaration May 15:

"We do not see how any legislative body can enact new laws governing such involved and explosive matters as labor-management relations without having the essential information (on the basic causes of disputes)."



Washington, D. C.—The Treasury's official Commendation and Citation for outstanding service to the War Finance program was given to the Electrical Workers' Local No. 26, A. F. of L., at Odd Fellows Hall here, with more than 250 members present. The award was accepted by President Joseph L. Creager and Business Manager Clem Freller.

"In accepting this high honor," President Creager said, "we promise to do everything possible to further the peacetime U. S. Savings Bond program."

An aluminum card for War Finance service was given to Mr. Creager, Mr. Freller, Financial Secretary C. Lowry, Recording Secretary D. S. Roadhouse, and members W. W. Mulligan, Wilbur Smith, E. W. McClesney, Sr., William J. Creamer and E. S. Porter. Mr. Freller, who is president of the Washington Central Labor Union, was appointed official U. S. Savings Bond Officer of the Electrical Workers Local No. 26. He said: "Although our union has purchased all the bonds it possibly could through our own treasury and will continue to buy them, our members also will continue to buy to the limit through the payroll savings plan, wherever possible. The Treasury Department can be assured that I will do my duty as bond officer to the utmost." Shown above at the presentation ceremony are Mr. Creager, Ernest J. Fontana, regional representative of the Labor Section, U. S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department and Mr. Freller.

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Green Asks Truman Veto Hobbs Bill

WYATT STRESSES VITAL NEED TO PASS VETERANS' EMERGENCY HOUSING BILL

Washington, D. C.—Unless the Wagner - Ellender - Taft Housing Bill is enacted quickly, America's war veterans will be unable to find homes, Wilson Wyatt, National Housing Expediter, warned a citizens housing rally here.

The housing chief and the three Senators for whom the measure is named charged that failure of the House to act on the bill has created a serious stumbling block to the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program.

This housing bill has been supported vigorously by the American Federation of Labor from the time of its introduction.

Wyatt told the housing rally that present building costs are higher than veterans can afford and that unless something is done to lower costs homeless veterans will be housed in "leftovers that other people don't want."

For veterans in the low-income group, who can't afford to pay higher rents, the only alternative to living in slums is the housing bill's provision for a half a million low-cost housing units, Wyatt added.

Asserting that "if the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill is not passed at this session of Congress the result will be calamitous," Senator Wagner (D., N. Y.) called for "a frontal attack" to force the issue before the House.

He called on President Truman to put the bill on his "must" list and on House leaders to insist on action.

Senator Ellender (D., La.) charged that some opponents of the bill have adopted a "shocking attitude." The opposition has developed, he said, because the bill provides public housing for families of low income.

The Senator stressed, however, that under the bill there would be no essential competition between private and public housing enterprises.

He called on the House Banking and Currency Committee to conduct its hearings on the bill "with speed and brevity" and to bring it on the House floor by early next month.

Declaring himself on opponent of Government interference in business, Senator Taft (R., Ohio) said he aided in introducing the bill because "private enterprise has failed to provide homes for low-income families."

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DON'T WRECK WAGNER ACT, BOARD COUNSELS

Washington, D. C.—The surest way to provoke industrial strife is to wreck the Wagner Act and deprive workers of their liberties, the National Labor Relations board warned Congress in its tenth annual report.

Labor's enemies have advocated amendment of the NLRA to hamstring unions as a prescription against strikes, but the board pointed out in its report that the law has effectively helped to prevent strikes by safeguarding labor's right to organize and bargain collectively.

"Disputes over recognition of this right have historically been the chief cause of costly strikes and lockouts," the board declared.

"The right to select his own representatives for collective bargaining is one that is deeply ingrained in the American worker, and any impairment of this right is fraught with the danger of industrial warfare," the board declared.

Over a million workers marched to the polls in 5,000 board elections, and in 83 per cent of them unions won out, the report for 1945 revealed.

During the first decade of the board's existence, well over 6,000,000 employes took advantage of this type of "economic democracy" and in that period 84 per cent selected unions as their bargaining agents.

"Unfair labor practice" cases against employers who sought to interfere with the right of their workers to organize declined somewhat in the past year, but still totaled 2,427. This indicated that, even though the Wagner Act has been on the statute books for over 10 years, it is still being flouted by die-hard bosses.

The board revealed, too, that it is still enjoying a high batting average of victories in cases where it must go to courts to get enforcement of orders against defiant employers.

Out of 66 such cases taken to U. S. courts of appeal during the year, the NLRB was sustained in 57.

HOBBS LABOR BILL VETO BEING ASKED BY GREEN

Washington, D. C.—Text of a telegram from AFL President William Green to President Truman urging veto of the Hobbs Bill as "dangerous legislation" follows:

I appeal to you in behalf of the millions of members of the American Federation of Labor to veto the Hobbs Bill, recently passed by the Congress of the United States. I base this appeal upon the following facts and information:

First, there is grave danger that the Hobbs Bill, if it becomes law, would interfere with the exercise of the legitimate activities of those employed in the transportation industry and in the production of goods shipped in interstate commerce.

By implication at least, the bill makes it a felony to strike and to picket peacefully and to take other legitimate and peaceful concerted action when strikes are resorted to by those employed in the transportation industry or in the production of goods shipped in interstate commerce.

There is no provision in the bill which sets forth that it was not to be construed so as to impair, diminish or in any manner affect the rights of bona fide labor organizations in lawfully carrying out the legitimate objects thereof.

Second, the bill is susceptible of broad and dangerous interpretations by the courts. The penalties provided in the bill might be imposed upon members as well as officers of unions engaged in a strike affecting interstate commerce when, through the influence and instigation of labor-hating employers, violence in some form might occur.

Third, if the Hobbs Bill becomes law, widespread discontent and unrest will prevail within the ranks of labor. It will serve to increase labor strife and prevent the development of friendly co-operative relationships between management and labor.

I am confident the public interest will be best served through your veto of this highly objectionable Hobbs Bill.

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AFL SEAMEN UNANIMOUS IN CALL FOR STRIKE VOTE

New York City — In session here, 1,200 members of the AFL Seafarers International Union voted unanimously to conduct a strike vote from July 1 to July 31.

The action was taken in a preliminary move by the union to protect its collective bargaining rights. It was directed against the Atlantic and Gulf Ship Operators' Association which rejected wage and hour demands made by the SIU and whose counter proposals to the union were similarly turned down as unsatisfactory.

A strike, which under the Smith - Connally law, can be called 30 days after intention to walk out is filed, would tie up 62,000 SIU seamen and members of its affiliate, the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. Actual date for start of the strike would be set by a vote of the membership.

Possibility also was seen that many thousands more would be affected as the AFL Maritime Council of Greater New York pledged its full support. The council has a membership of 200,000 workers.

The union had demanded a 30 per cent wage increase, a 40-hour week at sea and a 36-hour week ashore, with increased rates of overtime pay. At present AFL seaman get \$10 a week more than members of the CIO and the company insisted that this situation be equalized before a new agreement is negotiated.

Earlier the operators had offered a 48-hour week at sea; 44-hour week on ships in port; wage increases of from \$12.50 to \$24.50 a month, depending upon ratings, and overtime pay for all aboard ship at the rate of \$1 an hour.

Even the 35 per cent figure grossly understates the true hike in living costs, labor research experts contend. Their own studies, they said, show the rise has been close to 50 per cent. Many items which have skyrocketed in costs aren't even included in the index, they said.

OTHER LABOR LEADERS ALSO RAP MEASURE IN WIRES TO TRUMAN

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green, in a telegraphic message to President Truman, made an urgent appeal for immediate veto of the anti-labor Hobbs Bill.

Similar appeals poured into the White House from Daniel J. Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (AFL), and other AFL leaders throughout the Nation.

The Hobbs Bill, twice passed by the House, was given approval by the Senate on a voice vote and without debate or objection. It was called up for action by Senator Hatch (D.), of New Mexico.

The measure would make it a felony for any unionist to obstruct, delay or interfere with the movement of goods in interstate commerce. Penalties range up to 20 years in prison, and fines up to \$10,000.

Mr. Green, in his message to the President, called for veto of the bill on three grounds:

1—There is grave danger that it would, if it became law, "interfere with the exercise of the legitimate activities" of those engaged in the transportation industry and in the production of goods which enters interstate commerce.

2—that it is susceptible to board and dangerous interpretations by the courts. "The penalties provided in the bill might be imposed upon members as well as officers of unions engaged in a strike . . . when, through the influence and instigation of labor-hating employers, violence in some form might occur."

3—Widespread unrest and discontent will prevail in the ranks of labor if the measure becomes law.

Belief that the President will veto the Hobbs Bill stemmed from his discussion of its provisions when it was attached, in identical form, to the vicious Case Bill. In vetoing that measure, Mr. Truman said:

"This section would re-enact, in amended form, the so-called Anti-Racketeering Act. On its face, this section does no more than prohibit all persons, whether union representatives of employers or others, from interfering with interstate commerce by robbery and extortion."

"I am in full accord with the objectives which the Congress here had in mind."

"However, it has already been suggested that some question may arise from the fact that Section 7 omits from the original act the provision that it was not to be construed so as to 'impair, diminish or in any manner affect the rights of bona fide labor organizations in lawfully carrying out the legitimate objects thereof.'"

"It should be made clear in express terms that Section 1 does not make it a felony to strike and picket peacefully, and to take other legitimate and peaceful concerted action."

Tobin was in Chicago when informed the Hobbs Bill had been approved by the Senate and sent to the White House. He was sharply critical of this action which, he pointed out, was accomplished "without hearings and even without a roll call vote."

"Professedly, the Hobbs Bill is intended to prevent robbery and extortion by unions," he added. "It defines as extortion, legitimate and peaceful union practices. The definition of extortion is so broad and dangerous that any argument used by a union representative to persuade a nonmember to join might be interpreted as illegal by a hostile judge."

N. Y. FACTORY EMPLOYMENT IS HIGHEST SINCE V-J DAY
Albany, N. Y.—In the State of New York during April, factory employment rose to its highest level for any month since V-J Day, according to a report by the State Labor Department.