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Reactionaries Plot Death Of Price and Wage Controls

By PAUL S. GREEN

The Dixiecrat-Republican coalition ruling the Senate Banking Committee has taken a decisive step that may end in the destruction both of the price control program and the Wage Stabilization Board.

On the wage issue, the committee decided to strip the board of power to recommend wage dispute settlements, and to strip it of its industry and labor members, leaving it only with so-called public members. This is the proposal of Sen. Everett M. Dirksen (R., Ill.) and is substantially what was demanded by the board's industry members and by Charles Wilson former mobilization chief.

Green Warns

William Green, AFL president, has warned that labor might boycott the wage stabilization program if labor is deprived of a voice in setting wage policies.

Nathan P. Feinsinger, the Chairman of WSB, had told the committee that, "I cannot concur in the notion that the interests of labor and management are somehow inconsistent with the public interest."

Feinsinger also had said that it was his opinion that the rulings of the board have been more acceptable because labor, business, and the public have been represented. He saw no gain in an all-public board, and warned against the rejection of such a board's recommendations.

Public Power Only

The Senate Banking committee action further makes certain of the board's impotency by taking away its power to recommend wage dispute settlements. It would have to do with policy only.

The vote for this step to virtually kill WSB was for the proposal Democrats Maybank and Robertson, and Republicans Ives, Capehart, Schoepel, Dirksen, and Bricker. Voting against were Democrats Douglas, Moody, and Benton.

On prices, the committee voted to extend the controls program only until next March, changing a preliminary decision for a year's extension from June 30, the expiration date. President Truman had asked for a 2-year extension.

Such a step is a threat to the program because the new Congress will not be organized and in action passing measures by March 1, and the probabilities are that the program will be lost in the shuffle, and automatically brought to an end.

Further, Sens. Paul Douglas and Blair Moody, Democratic members of the committee, declared:

"All the amendments adopted were weakening amendments favoring special interests. The committee did not adopt a single strengthening amendment favoring the consuming public.

"The consumers as such

have no lobby in their behalf. The committee's action shows that the consumer's voice is woefully weak and all too little attention is paid to his interests.

Can't Remove Controls

"As it stands, the measure is better than nothing, even though the dikes are weakened. The time has not yet come when the American people dare remove controls entirely."

The whole chorus of Big Business, led by the National Association of Manufacturers and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, had called for the complete scrapping of controls now. Apparently the committee majority did not dare do that yet, but they may accomplish the same purpose by this bill, which weakens the program sufficiently to pave the way for letting it die next year.

Voting for this proposal were Democrats Maybank, Frear, and Robertson, and Republicans Ives, Capehart, Schoepel, Dirksen, and Bricker. Voting against it were Democrats Douglas, Moody, Benton, and Fulbright.

The fight now shifts to the Senate floor, where the outnumbered band of progressives will continue to battle against legislation for special interests.

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