

"PRO AND CON" RADIO SHOW
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HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ANN: Well, Senator, for the second time in two years we're busy setting out our ideas on American labor relations. In 1947, Congress changed the rules of industrial relations through the Taft-Hartley act. Now the 81st Congress plans to requite Taft-Hartley. I understand, Senator Humphrey that you're one of the most insistent on revising the law. Just what parts do you want to change?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I want to see the whole thing changed, Mr. ^{eed}~~Page~~.

I am in favor of the Thomas Bill which repeals the Taft-Hartley act.

A labor law, affecting a fundamental part of our whole way of life, has to be discussed as a whole and in relation to the whole ^{problem} — to the entire economy and the entire American society.

We have to know a little about trade unions and their record in this country. And we have to go into the real effects of the Taft-Hartley act.

I think it is positive proof of the value of trade unions to the whole country that today no one is willing to stand up and say there shouldn't be unions any more. Everybody is willing to admit that unions serve not only a few people but the whole country.

Union strength really began after the Wagner Labor Relations act was passed in 1935, a law that set the stage for real collective bargaining. The Wagner act was one of the pillars that raised our country out of the depression. Wider distribution of our nation's income was essential in starting us toward economic recovery — and the organization of trade unions was the democratic, free enterprise way of broadening the distribution of wealth.

Through trade unions, working people achieved status in their own communities-- they have become an equal part of the community -- equal with management, equal with the farmer. Through their unions they are represented on government boards and commissions, on radio programs and on religious and patriotic occasions, on local committees and community councils. They have achieved social equality -- real democracy.

With this in mind it is important to recall that witness after witness testified before our Senate Labor Committee last month that trade union organizing has become more difficult because of Taft-Hartley.

< Before the war, the Wagner Act constantly reduced strikes. During the war years, strikes were almost non-existent. Labor was represented on the many important agencies which governed our wartime economy. In fact it can be said that the Wagner act created the kind of labor-management relationships without which we could never have had a peaceful and democratic economy during the second world war.

~~So the Wagner act did a fine job before the war. It created proper labor relations during the war. And then what do we find?~~
Immediately after the war a great hue and cry is raised against unions and against our labor relations policy.

ANNOUNCER: Don't you think that it was the large number of strikes immediately after the war that brought on this anti-union sentiment?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: ~~Frankly, Mr. [redacted], I don't think there was a general anti-union sentiment outside of Congress. I think all of us who approve of unions -- and that's the overwhelming majority -- were just tired and~~

apathetic after the war and a handful of big business people -- whose corporations had piled up 42 billion dollars in undistributed profits and who could afford a full-scale propaganda war -- just took over the field.

Actually, you know, anti-union laws were presented to Congress long before the postwar strikes began. Let's take a look at that postwar period. We haven't looked at any of the causes of those strikes, you know. I have a feeling that those strikes were caused by record-breaking corporate profits for management while labor was presented with dropping real wages, rising prices, poor housing and inadequate social security.

While workers' real wages were going down, corporation profits were leaping. Profits stood at 8 billion 700 million dollars in 1945, as compared to 5 billion in 1939. In 1946 profits were up to 12 billion 800 million dollars and up to 18 billion 100 million in 1947. Those are facts that

have to be considered in drawing up a labor-management law.

ANNOUNCER: Then you don't think the Taft-Hartley act dealt with the real cause of the strikes?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, the Taft-Hartley act didn't cut strikes at all.

It actually caused strikes. In our hearings we discovered a number of strikes -- most notably the International Typographical Union strikes -- which were directly caused by the act. Let's check some statistics:

From 1935 to 1939 under the Wagner act the annual man days lost through strikes was less than 17 million. Last year -- under the Taft-Hartley -- it was more than double that figure -- 34 million man-days lost. After the war there was a trend of sharply dropping man days lost through strikes.

This trend downward was actually slowed to a halt after Taft-Hartley was put on the books.

ANNOUNCER: Aren't there any good parts to Taft-Hartley?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: All during the hearings, some of the senators have been trying to take the bill apart and talk about it section by section in a vacuum. It doesn't operate in a vacuum and no one applies it section by section. In dispute after dispute a number of Taft-Hartley sections have been applied all at once. Basically, the act represents a complete shifting of labor relations methods -- giving up of the principle of collective bargaining and of free enterprise -- and reverting to absolute and inflexible rule-making by the Congress and the Courts and prosecution by one man -- the Labor board general counsel.

Senator Taft is always saying if each section is all right alone, how is it possible that all the sections together are bad? The answer, I suppose, is that one neat fence around a house may be good, but a dozen similar fences around the house don't help matters at all.

ANNOUNCER: Are we to infer, Senator, that there are Taft-Hartley provisions that are good by themselves -- that you would favor incorporating in the Thomas bill? We've heard, for instance, that a lot of people don't want the Taft-Hartley law repealed because they are afraid the country will be at the mercy of unions in national emergencies. Would you favor keeping the Taft-Hartley provisions on national emergencies?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Absolutely not. The Taft-Hartley act hasn't handled one emergency strike satisfactorily. Not one. The Thomas bill on the other

hand provides effective machinery for protecting the country against strikes in vital industries. The Thomas bill provides for a brief period of strike delay during which a non-partisan fact-finding board can make a study of the claims of union and management and make suitable recommendations. This procedure can bring peace out of the dispute. It doesn't involve one-sided injunctions against the union -- injunctions that make the public think

it is always the workers who are at fault.

and at all times the President can protect the nation's welfare.

This national emergency problem is not as easy as some folks

think. The Taft-Hartley provisions on national emergencies were a total failure. Five times the President used the machinery set up under the act to solve disputes and 5 times the machinery failed. It succeeded only in delaying and slowing up settlement. If we want to protect the public from work stoppage in vital industries, we must protect the worker from injustices in those industries and we must avoid a situation where men and women are forced to work for the company's profit when

they feel they have a legitimate grievance against the company.

T-H. does force workers to work - against their will - in S

ANNOUNCER: We've heard a good deal about the Taft-Hartley act protecting

the workers against labor racketeering. What about that?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The argument that workers want to escape from their union bosses was certainly exploded the past two years. Workers have voted overwhelming for a union shop in more than 98% of the secret-ballot elections.

And the real answer to that myth came in the voting booths last November. There was no question in any voters' mind about which side was for Taft-Hartley and which side wasn't. Not many workers looked to the

Republican party for protection from their labor bosses.

ANNOUNCER: There is real protection in Taft-Hartley from Communist-domination of labor unions, isn't there?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No there isn't. All the Taft-Hartley law does is take away the privileges of collective bargaining -- to no one's ultimate good-- from a union whose leaders refuse to sign affidavits. Some good non-Communists refused to sign the affidavits. ~~← Their unions, like the ^{Communist dominated} CIO unions, have been deprived of their right to use the National Labor Relations act -- although a recent ruling declared that they are subject to its penalties even though deprived of its privileges. That's all the members, not just the Communist members -- and that's all unions whose leaders didn't sign affidavits, not just Communist unions. →~~

Non-Communist labor leaders didn't sign because they felt -- and I feel -- that imposing that kind of rule on labor leaders was an unnecessary and deliberate slap in the face to the whole labor movement whose loyalty to this country is unimpeachable. Furthermore the problem of Communism is not a labor-relations problem, it is a judicial problem. Why don't we take up the Communist question where it belongs -- as a danger to the nation as a whole, instead of as an insult to our loyal workers throughout the country?

ANNOUNCER: What other sections of Taft-Hartley do you think ought to be left out of the Thomas labor relations bill?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well in the hearings we've hit upon a large number of bad stumbling blocks to labor peace and justice. There are just too many to bring up in a 15 minute radio show.

One that stands out is the provision on the Labor Board General Counsel. Under the Taft-Hartley act, the General Counsel is a virtual labor czar. The General Counsel can issue an injunction to halt certain strikes applied for 40 injunctions whenever he pleases -- and he has / against unions under the Taft-Hartley act. These injunctions which are issued at the discretion of the General Counsel and one judge can stop action and bargaining, can force men back to work for an employer against whom they have grievances. When the case is finally settled -- as much as a year later, sometimes longer -- often the decision is reversed by the National Labor Relations Board, and a ruling is made in favor of the union. Meanwhile the union has suffered a great deal, unjustly. Sometimes the union has been destroyed, through the arbitrary ruling of one man, the general counsel.

To close quickly, I better hit on the most dangerous provision of all -- a provision ^{Senator} Robert Taft, a sponsor of Taft-Hartley, has admitted is too anti-union. That's the provision that allows an employer to call ^{union} for a representation election while his workers are out on a legitimate strike. The employer claims that the Union no longer represents the workers at his plant. The workers on strike are not allowed to vote in the election even though some of them had been employed there for 15 or 20 years before. Only the newly hired workers -- the strike breakers -- can vote. That's the way to break unions.

You can't just amend an act like that. There is too much wrong with it -- too many pitfalls that keep cropping out every day, in every new decision of the labor board.

ANNOUNCER: It is your opinion then that the Thoms act in repealing the Taft-Hartley can set us back on the road to proper labor-management relations?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Absolutely. It will continue the philosophy of the Wagner act -- a philosophy which means more representation to more workers; more pay for the underprivileged workers; a better, fairer society for everyone.

It continues the constantly improving labor-relations picture of Wagner act days, with a few improvements where the Wagner act was deficient. It provides government framework for private free bargaining rather than government edict and court order.

In short, the Thomas bill provides that men of good will can get together for the benefit of the whole nation to increase production, improve working conditions and maintain high level employment and a high standard of living.

The Thomas Bill, Mr. Eade, is a democratic bill for free men and a free economy.



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