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Truman Asks American People To Pour Heat On Congress

APPEALS FOR SUPPORT OF LIBERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Washington, D.C. — Taking a leaf from labor's book, President Truman in a nationwide radio address appealed to the American people to put the heat on their members of Congress to break the long jam blocking progressive legislation for the protection of human needs.

The President's language was temperate but the sum total of his indictment against Congress severe.

He emphasized that he proposed a whole series of vital and progressive laws — as full employment, unemployment compensation, minimum wages and health insurance — and added:

"But Congress has done little — very little — about them."

Finding his program blocked and stultified at every turn, the President turned to the people for support. He said:

"The members of the Con-

gress are now at home. During this period they will have the benefit of close contact with you — the people whom they serve.

"From personal experience, I know that contact with the people back home helps every public servant. I urge you to tell your public servants your own views concerning the grave problems facing our country. In a free country the voice of the people must be heard.

"I fully appreciate the many problems which Congressmen face. They have done a great wartime job under most trying conditions. The complicated return to peacetime has increased their difficulties.

"I seek no conflict with the Congress. I earnestly desire co-operation with the Congress. Orderly procedure in the Congress is indispensable to the democratic process. But orderly procedure does not mean needless delay.

"Stable world relationships require full production and full employment in the United States.

"There are voices of defeat, dismay, timidity among us who say we cannot do it. These I challenge. They will not guide us to success, these men of little faith.

"We cannot shirk leadership in the postwar world. The problems of our economy will not be solved by timid men, mistrustful of each other. We cannot face 1946 in a spirit of drift or irresolution.

"The men and women who made this country great and kept it free were plain people with courage and faith.

"Let us justify this heritage."

AFL leaders expressed agreement with every point in President Truman's program but one — and that was his recommendation for the appointment of government fact-finding boards to deal with labor disputes during compulsory cooling-off periods.

"This cure is worse than the disease," AFL President William Green said, reiterating labor's specific objections to this measure as embodied in the Norton-Ellender bill.

The White House announced the President had received more than 500 telegrams in response to the radio message, 80 percent of them favorable. Congressional mail was reported to have jumped only 10 percent.

This somewhat disappointing response was tempered by the fact that most Congressmen were home and their constituents may have had opportunities to contact them personally.

Reports circulated in Washington that the President originally included sharp and specific criticisms in his speech of the CIO and some of the large corporations with which it is now engaged in disputes. Such references were tempered down in the final version. The President charged that "some" of the promises of teamwork given to him by labor and management after V-J Day had not been kept and again, in speaking of factfinding, he declared the purposes of his recommendation "have been misrepresented by some of the spokesmen for labor and management."

AFL leaders derived chief comfort from the following paragraph in the address:

"I have indicated my opposition, and I repeat it now, to the antilabor bills pending in the Congress which seek to deprive labor of the right to bargain collectively, or which seek to deprive a union of its ultimate right to strike."

unions should be interested in examining the profit figures for 1944, as revealed in a statement filed by the OPA with the Senate Small Business Committee. Profit increases in 1944 over the 1936-39 period, which was quite prosperous, include:

Hardware retailers, 464 percent; small furniture stores, 185 percent; variety chain stores, 339 percent; men's apparel stores, 398 percent; department and speciality stores, 1,324 percent; chain grocery stores, 152 percent; music stores, 210 percent; automobile dealers, 200 percent.

So much for retailers. These increases in profits show how well the wholesalers also fared:

Hardware wholesalers, 179 percent; dry goods, 639 percent; grocery 25 percent.

Of course, the distribution end of business, on the whole, took a back seat to the manufacturing end, as these profit increases emphasize:

All manufacturing, 450 percent; textile and leather, 730 percent; transportation equipment, 650 percent; metals and products, 590 percent; building materials, 270 percent; chemicals, 230 percent; food, beverages and tobacco, 200 percent.

Record-Breaking Profits In 1946 Forecast By OPA For Industry

Washington, D. C. — This is going to be a banner year for profits, the Office of Price Administration predicted. With excess profits taxes repealed, industry should earn its greatest profits in history, the federal agency said.

This statement is especially significant because American business made profit history in the last two years and earnings still going up.

The figures for 1945 are not yet available, but they were greater than in 1944, a "fantastic" profit year.

American workers and trade

CALIFORNIA LABOR SCHOOL OPENS NEW SESSIONS

San Francisco. — With the new spring term beginning Jan. 7, the California Labor School, sponsored by AFL, CIO and rail unions, is offering a fulltime veterans educational program.

At the request of veterans who wished to be informed on the labor movement, courses have been arranged in union organization and administration, social sciences, writing, public relations and industrial arts.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION — THE WAY FORWARD

The significance of the recent Management-Labor Conference was ignored by most American newspapers. Its outstanding achievements were played down, and the American public was given the false impression that it had been a failure. Perhaps some reporters wanted to make it appear so, in order to clear the way for legislation to control labor. Actually, the Conference did more than any amount of legislation to promote peaceful settlement of disputes.

Management-Labor Conference Opens Way for Progress.— The Conference resulted in at least three major achievements: (1) For four weeks (November 5 to 30) top leaders of labor and management met together and came to a clearer understanding of each other's viewpoint and problems. (2) In three unanimous reports, they reduced to writing certain vital principles for collective bargaining, accepted by both parties, and gave a blueprint for reorganizing the U. S. Conciliation Service to fit it for constructive work in the settlement of disputes. (3) They provided for a continuing committee, with four representatives each from management and labor, which can carry forward the joint consideration of their common problems, enlarge the area of knowledge, understanding and agreement, and bring further progress in collective bargaining.

The Conference marks a milestone in labor relations. After World War I, management refused to recognize collective bargaining and waged bitter warfare against unions. Today, both national organizations of employers officially endorse collective bargaining as a constructive factor in American economic life. However, there are persons who advocate government control of labor relations, and the bill for labor fact-finding boards, introduced in Congress immediately after the close of the Management-Labor Conference, imposes such controls. Our country must therefore decide between two alternatives in labor relations: Collective bargaining or control through government boards.

Under collective bargaining, management and labor together work out the knotty problems of wages and other conditions around the conference table. Facts and records bearing on all matters concerned can be brought and studied by both parties. Decisions are adapted to the particular conditions of each plant or industry because they are made by those who best know the circumstances and who will carry out the agreement reached.

During the war, collective bargaining was broadened in many plants to include union-management production committees. Joint consideration of plant problems combined the genius of management and labor to create our war production miracle. Eighty-five percent of American war material was produced in plants where collective bargaining prevailed. The Management-Labor Conference has now paved the way for further progress.

The bill for labor fact finding boards on the other hand, would turn back the clock of progress. Under this bill, the Secretary of Labor could certify to the President any labor dispute affecting "the national public interest," and the President could appoint a fact finding board of three or more persons. A 30-day cooling off period would be imposed during which strikes would be illegal; the board would then report its findings and recommendations. By making strikes a crime and thus imposing involuntary servitude on labor the bill goes far beyond the Railway Labor Act.

This bill would take the process of negotiations out of the hands of management and labor and place it in the hands of outsiders who have no direct knowledge of the problems concerned. Facts and records would be brought together by the government board and studied by it, not by workers and employers who have experience in the production. The board's findings or decision, not the conclusions of management and labor, would set the terms to govern the plant concerned. Such a process would kill the joint management-labor consideration of facts and problems which is at the heart of American productive efficiency and high living standards.

Under government fact-finding boards in the railway industry, workers have made far less progress than under free collective bargaining in other industries. It is significant that from 1926 to 1944, hourly wages of railroad workers rose only 50% under government boards, while hourly wages of factory workers rose nearly 100% under collective bargaining.

Further development of collective bargaining is the way forward for America, if we wish to maintain our free enterprise system, which is the basis of political democracy. If, on the other hand, the objective is to develop a breach between management and labor so that government controls over the American economy may be widened, then government fact-finding boards are an excellent mechanism with which to begin.

Important Principles Adopted by Management-Labor Conference.— Labor unrest and strikes cannot be ended by finding some simple formula to be adopted universally. Yet this is what the public was led to expect the Management-Labor Conference to do.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)