

JOHN E. FOGARTY (2nd R. I. District) on Radio Program (New England in Congress) Yankee Network, Station WEAN, Providence, R. I.; 7:45, Saturday, January 25, 1947.

- Q. Since the last Congressional elections there has been a great deal of discussion on the subject of Labor. All kinds of ideas have been advanced for handling the problems which are grouped under the head of "Labor". Numerous bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate and I wonder if you would tell me just what is your attitude toward the proposed legislation on this subject?
- A. Some members of Congress have never been sympathetic toward Labor's position. It's fair to say some of these men are motivated by a firm purpose to cut down Labor unions in any manner they can. Others, apparently well-meaning Members of Congress, are of the opinion that Union members, or at least Union officials should be punished in some way or other. These Members interpret the results of the last election as a rebuke to Labor Unions - I have heard that opinion expressed. Now I don't think that is the sensible attitude to take. Aside from any statistical interpretation of the results of the last election - what the average person wants - and this includes members of trade unions as well as non-union people - what he wants is not an end to unions - but an end to industrial disorder, or strife, or whatever name one sees fit to give it. What he wants is production with fair prices and decent jobs at fair wages. As I see it, the job is to find a way to promote that desire of all Americans.
- Q. Do you mean that no legislation at all is needed - whether new laws or amendments of old ones?
- A. I would never make a flat statement that no legislation should be enacted.

Laws are constantly being reconsidered in the light of new developments.

But, I do think those who have rushed forth with the present crop of so-called labor legislation are going at this thing the wrong way.

Q. Why do you say that?

A. Well - these same men who are advocating new control agencies - or new functions for old Federal agencies - to control, interfere with, or dominate Labor unions - are the same men who decry the fact that there is already too much government interference with our daily lives.

Q. Then would you say Industry - both from the standpoint of Management and Labor - would be better off if there were less Government interest in Industrial Relations?

A. I would, absolutely, I think our efforts should be directed toward removing the Government from business, at least in this connection; to get back to genuine collective bargaining for the settlement of industrial disputes.

Q. How do you propose such a "return to collective bargaining", as you phrase it, could be brought about?

A. I think it could come about very easily, if Management, or Business, would take up willingly the opportunity for leadership which is now in its hands.

Q. Do I understand you to infer that Management in the past has failed to exercise leadership in the field of industrial relations?

A. That's correct. I believe, in all sincerity, that it was the failure of business to show some genuine leadership that resulted in the growth of unions, and in the enactment of the labor legislation which is presently on the Federal Statute Books.

Q. Do I understand from that, that you feel Labor has been exercising whatever leadership there has been?

A. Not exactly that - the fact is that in years past the working men and women looked to management for leadership in their constant struggle for economic security. Management failed miserably. The result was that employees were forced, whether they would or no, to form unions - labor organizations - in order, through the strength of numbers, to force management into making some long overdue concessions.

Q. Did that provide at that time, what we hear referred to now as a "balance" between labor and management?

A. It should have, and had management recognized that unions were here to stay, labor could have been admitted as a partner in the industrial function, and then labor and management could have worked out its problems in a spirit of cooperation.

Q. But isn't it a fact Congressman, that management did try to bargain with the unions?

A. It is a fact that there were meetings in some industries. Some business leaders actually welcomed the union representatives as spokesmen for their hundreds of employees and with them worked out plans for betterment. Most, however, refused to recognize the unions and were determined to break them. Prior to the 1930's, business, generally, rejected its opportunity for leadership and embarked upon a program of union busting. They did not lead - they fought the unions. That is an historical fact.

Q. Is it your opinion that this attitude was responsible for the industrial discord we have had in recent years?

A. Well - it's been a progressive thing. The employees had turned to their unions

for leadership when management failed to provide it. When the unions failed to find a spirit of cooperation in business leaders, they turned, of necessity, to some outside agency. Their aims were honest and legitimate, so where else could they turn but to the state. They looked to the Federal Government for assistance in their efforts to achieve a better life for their people. And the State provided the assistance and the leadership which they sought. You must remember that a Government, being a political body is always attentive to the cries of great numbers of its people. That is borne out by the present statements of many Republicans - they plead that the GOP should not go too far with anti-labor legislation. They want to get the Labor vote in 1948.

Q. Will you explain what you mean by your statement that the Federal Government provided the "assistance and leadership which the unions looked for?

A. It's not always easy, you understand, to put an attitude, or a state of mind, into concrete, definite words and phrases. But, let me put it this way. Many big industrialists - those who dominated the field, generally, refused to accept the idea of sitting down and bargaining with union representatives as free men - so the Federal Government provided the Wagner Act., that's the act which set up the National Labor relations Board and made collective bargaining a protected right of the labor unions.

Labor Unions strived for an intelligent attitude toward the men and women who operate the machinery of business. Industry provides for the retirement of machinery and capital assets - but it gave no thought to the human element in the plant - here the Federal Government provided Social Security.

Industry provided insurance against the times when machinery was down and not producing income - but gave no thought to the men who were also down and producing no income. The Federal Government provided Unemployment Compensation.

Industry believed wages should be governed by the number of employables in the general labor pool. Available labor competed one with another for the available jobs. Wages were kept at a low level. The Federal Government stepped in and provided the Fair Labor Standards Act setting a minimum on wages and a maximum on hours at straight time.

Q. Isn't it fair to say that this was a good development in Industrial Relations?

A. Yes, it is in the sense that it marks progress. But it is not so good when you consider that this marks the entrance of the State as a dominant element in Industrial Relations.

Q. I don't follow your idea, Congressman. How can this helping hand of the Federal Government be considered a harmful influence?

A. It is my belief that this "Helping hand" as you call it - interfered with the proper effectiveness of genuine collective bargaining, as it should be conducted by free men in a free society. You see we had, along with the benefits obtained from all this legislation, the active interest of an all powerful authority - the State. Labor had no choice in the matter.

Labor was driven into the arms of Government in order to win a square deal from employers. It naturally looked in that direction for protection of the rights which the State recognized. It received that protection but with it came additional administrative orders, executive direction, court decrees and a general manifestation of the authority of the State.

Since this was so it might be said that Labor leaned on the Government. Management, as a result, looks to the State for clarification of its position. The net result is the present situation in industrial relations. Instead of having management and Labor bargaining as free people - we have management, labor and government involved in a never-ending bickering, that threatens to

Wipe out every vestige of free collective bargaining.

Q. That brings us to just about the point where we started, Congressman. I can appreciate your attitude on the Labor situation but isn't it a fact that we have to have action of some kind? The question, it appears, is what kind of action we should have.

A. That's exactly the position we are in as I see it. I don't like the insistence on more governmental authority. With that authority will come more control and it is foolish for Labor Unions or Business to think they can have one controlled and not the other. Labor will be insisting on Government control of ~~the industry~~. INDUSTRY - AND INDUSTRY WANTS GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF UNIONS The achievement of both goals would be the end of our "free enterprise system" and the beginning of a socialist state. Some men insist that is the only way out. I insist our system can function, and solve all our problems, if free men will act like intelligent men and get on with the job.

Q. What steps do you suggest toward this end?

A. Let's have an end to the attitude that Labor is the enemy of industry. Labor is just as essential to Industry as Industry is to Labor. One complements the other. Industry had a chance, years ago, to provide the essential leadership which would have produced a better and more well ordered life for all of us. It muffed that opportunity and the state had to step in.

Let Industry now demonstrate intelligent leadership. Industry makes use of every possible facet of scientific knowledge to develop its operations. Let it also make use of every possible facet of social and political knowledge to cultivate the human beings who make its operations possible. The leaders of industry in many places have shown that leadership. There are many instances of industries where a strike is unheard of, where employees have intimate, personal relations with their employers, and where employees

enjoy better conditions than are provided by all the Federal and State legislation on Social Security, etc.

Industry knows that the working man's chief concern is a decent wage that will enable him to enjoy the benefits of our industrial output. If Industry is equal to the opportunity which is afforded it at this juncture in our National development, then we can ease the state out of the picture altogether and all of us can enjoy industrial peace and progress. Industrial peace, and the real progress we all work and hope for, cannot be obtained, and will not be promoted, by writing into the law of the land the punitive measures which are advocated in the current crop of so-called Labor Legislation.