

ADDRESS OF HON. JOHN E. FOGARTY, M.C. (2ND RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT) BEFORE SEMI-ANNUAL CONVENTION RHODE ISLAND STATE BRANCH A. F. L. AT NARRAGANSETT HOTEL, SUNDAY, APRIL 27th, 1947.

During the early days of the Trade Union movement, no course of conduct was too contemptible if it would enable industrialists to destroy the effectiveness of those who worked for the organization of employees.

Injunctions, labor spies, lock-outs, clubs and even hot-lead were the weapons used by management to crush organized labor in its infancy.

Management always had ready at hand its petitions for injunctions whenever its employees or their duly chosen representatives sought relief from outrageous working conditions or slave-labor wages.

And management most always found a sympathetic court which would break up a picket line with enthusiasm - or support a move to run in scabs and strikebreakers.

When patience grew short and the threat of hunger and misery caused tempers to run high - then there were the imported goons and sluggers - with their truncheons and rifles - to cow or kill those who dared strike for the principle that men are not commodities to be bartered and sold - but creatures of God, entitled to a fair share of the economic wealth which they helped to create.

Down through the years labor has fought against intolerance and hate - suffered misery and hunger - experienced violence and murder - in its never-ending quest for social justice.

During all this period - which is generally the complete history of industry in the United States - management had within its power the opportunity to provide positive and intelligent leadership to its employees.

Most of these employees, whose sweat and toil kept the wheels of mills and factories turning, and whose strong backs cleared the way for the roads

and highways which link our great cities of today, Most of these were immigrants - or the children of immigrants. Some who came from England understood the meaning of trade unions - but even these knew too the evils of class hatred and economic oppression. Those from other lands knew little and cared less about the possibilities of labor organizations.

In such an atmosphere - the giants of our early industries could have provided the leadership necessary to develop a genuinely harmonious attitude between employer and employee. The little people who lived in company houses and did business with the company store cried for such leadership. The men who labored deep in the pits pleaded for a helping hand and constructive advice. The men and women in factories - the parents of the children who forfeited their youth toiling in the evil stench of sweat shops - all begged for the leadership which could have been provided them - had it not been for the greed and selfishness of the great "Rugged Individualists" of that day.

In desperation - to protect themselves and their families - these people were forced to form organizations of their own - the better to cope with the brutality of management.

Even then the titans of industry could have shown a willingness to cooperate and could have contributed greatly toward shaping the ends toward which these infant unions should direct their energies.

But, instead of cooperation the labor unions were offered vicious opposition - and management wrote the blackest page in America's economic life. A violent crusade was launched with its objective the destruction of all labor unions - and the banishment of all who dared to carry a union card.

Such is the story of management's failure to provide the leadership of which they now boast they are capable. This is the type of encouragement and advice which has been given the workers of the country by the great champions of private enterprise.

We had come to think all this was behind us - but the interests which now dominate the thinking of the present federal legislature are still of the same mind - and they have clearly demonstrated their selfishness and shortsightedness through the so-called Labor Bill which they whipped through the House of Representatives a week ago.

For months - if not years - we have listened to the pious promise that all they sought was a balance between labor and management. They solemnly declared their firm belief that collective bargaining was here to stay. Then in one fell swoop they wrote the death sentence for all organized labor in the United States.

They have branded previous Congresses as incompetent or pro-labor - forgetting that it was blood-shed and misery which finally drove Congress to enact the legislation which they would eliminate. It was the anti-labor attitude of the courts of the land with their eagerness to grant injunctive relief at the drop of the hat; it was the sweat shop with all its evils; it was the lock-out and the yellow dog contract; it was the massacre in Chicago. It was all these things piled one on another - not the power of labor unions - which forced Congress finally to enact legislation which guaranteed to the man and woman whose labor creates capital - a voice in the conduct of his present day life - and the development of his future and the future of his children.

Here management had a clear demonstration of the will of the people of the land - a proclamation that justice was every man's right - and not the privilege only of those whose wealth could buy it. But, again, management refused to accede to the conditions of the times - and admit progress was the order of the day.

Again a crusade was launched - its end - the abolition of all the

progress labor unions had made - the reduction of the working man and woman to the level he formerly occupied - where he could be forced to compete with his brother - in an inflated labor market - willing, yes, eager, to accept whatever wage was tendered him - regardless of its relation to the prices he must pay for all his families needs.

Ever since that legislation was put on the books - there has been the same constant grinding away. Consistent and deliberate, some industrialists have endeavored to sell the idea that labor unions are evil things and should be severely restricted. Their constant reiteration of the statement that they sought only a fair balance between management and labor has been given the lie by the vicious instrument which they have succeeded in getting through the House - this marks the culmination of their crusade.

I am not one to make predictions - but in all honesty I am unable to see how any labor union can survive, except as an innocuous fraternal society if this Hartley Bill is allowed to become law.

Under this Hartley Bill the monopoly of Industry is sustained but it is denied the right - even if wished - to bargain through national unions. These national unions are branded as evil things - in spite of the fact that the Steel Union - in Industry-wide bargaining - has brought peace and cooperation to the entire Steel industry in an excellent example of what can be accomplished through genuine collective bargaining. More - this Steel Union insisted that it sought only an increase which would bring its members wages more nearly into line with current prices. The great Statesman, Senator Taft, decried this increase as threatening the economic structure of the country - and predicted it would be the immediate cause of greater inflation. But, contrary to Mr. Taft's statement, the U. S. Steel Corporation has announced that it can and will absorb the increase. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

referred to it as "a moderate adjustment to keep steel wages in line with the increase in the cost of living". Representatives of the Steel industry have called on their employees for greater efficiency and production - and have promised price reductions.

Another example of the evils of industry wide bargaining: The Electrical workers - through collective bargaining - have agreed to a moderate cost-of-living wage increase. Was this threatened our economy as Senator Taft wails - quite the contrary. Just before I left Washington I had a wire from the General Cable Corporation - one of the biggest in the field - stating in positive terms - a general reduction of prices beginning April 23rd. The wage increase to the employees amounted to 11½ percent - and the reduction in prices on some items has been ten and twelve per cent.

Under this Hartley Bill - such cooperation between Industry and Labor Unions would be impossible. Under this bill the employer is given the right to break up a union - to plant labor spies - at the work bench and at the union meeting. He is given the right to deny Union security, and a fine and imprisonment faces the men who dare strike to win that right.

Under this bill the employer has the right to break up a union organization in his plant. The closed shop is gone; the union shop is gone; and there is nothing the union or its members can do about it without the express consent of the employer.

The hated anti-labor injunction is recreated and made a formidable whip to keep employees in line. Far worse than in its hey-day - the injunction now would be backed up by all the wealth and power of the Federal Government.

It is made possible for the employer to break a strike through the importation of professional strike-breakers. An employee who strikes may or may not get his old job back on the termination of the strike - depending upon

the state of mind at the moment of his employer.

The employer is provided a method for forcing wage cuts - and through interminable stalling, as authorized in the Hartley Bill, can prevent a strike against admittedly unfair labor practices. The employee faces the injunction, criminal prosecution, treble-damages, loss of earnings and ultimately, loss of his job. But the employer's violation is subject merely to a cease and desist order issued after hearing before an administrative agency - and a review in the courts.

That is the "balance" industry wants restored.

The equitable consideration they claimed to seek - now resolves itself into the right to lock-out employees and blacklist them if they dare to join in a strike by other employees. Their "balance" is the right, guaranteed in this Bill, to prevent the determination of a bargaining agent - the heart of collective bargaining. This is destroyed the principle of Collective Bargaining which management has claimed it is willing to accept.

The sponsors of this Hartley Bill - promised that this bill would promote industrial harmony, would serve as a boost to production - would make for a higher standard of living for all Americans.

Again avoiding predictions - I promise, if this bill becomes law, we shall have complete industrial chaos. It is folly to think, after the blood, sweat and tears which have been expended over the years by laboring men and women to achieve the position they now occupy, that the trade union movement will supinely accept this dictatorial insult - and disband into social groups ready and willing to become once again the lower strata of our society - unable to advance their own cause.

The working men and women of this country have struggled for generations to win an honored position in society. They turned to their government for

help when Industry denied them. If their government is now to become a strike-breaking, union busting agency, then the working people of the land will be driven to the adoption of some other machinery for the achievement of their just objectives.

The interests controlling the present Congress cry long and loud about the merits of private enterprise. Insist Labor Unions are the best possible guarantee of the permanence of private enterprise, but some seem to lose sight of this fact and by their conduct would drive laboring people into other arms.

Roscoe Cannaday - not a union man - but a member of the International Business Standards Committee - put the case clearly in denouncing proposed legislation such as the Hartley Bill, when he stated:

" I am convinced that it is absolutely impossible to prevent our employees from joining unions if they wish to do so. I am convinced that it is absolutely impossible, by strong arm methods or by any law, to destroy labor unions already in existence..... I am convinced, he said, that more thought about the general welfare and a more generous attitude on the part of the employers and the use of more intelligent and more cooperative, democratic methods either directly with employees or with their chosen representatives in the long run not only will be the most economical and most profitable for business but, indeed, may be the only way we can save ourselves from some form of socialistic government."

Henry Ford II not a union man, but certainly an authority on American industry - said, a year ago-

"We cannot expect legislation to solve our problems. Laws which seek to force large groups of Americans to do what they believe is unfair and against their best interests are not likely to succeed. In fact, such legislation can lead to exaggeration of the very problem it is designed to solve....."

I submit to every thinking person that this is the Hartley Bill in a nutshell. It aggravates existing difficulties - it exaggerates the very problem it pretends to solve.

The claim that a balance was the end sought is proven false.

The objective is plainly apparent and we have not only the right but the solemn duty to speak out in denunciation of this foul attack on the rights of every working man and woman in the country.

This bill will not promote prosperity. It will prevent prosperity. It will drive unions to adopt counter-measures, it will load the courts with industrial disputes which will occupy the judicial branch of our Government for years - until some sensible Congress repeals it.

It will serve notice that unions are to be busted. It will warn all Americans that their social welfare is not the concern of Government and thus it will lead to a general break-down of our concept of the Democratic System.

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