

and voluntary arbitration to aid and encourage employers and the representatives of their employees to reach and maintain agreement * * * and to make all reasonable efforts to settle their differences by mutual agreement reached through conferences and collective bargaining * * *."

This is all we do. The Service issues no decisions or rulings; it does not adjudicate; it has no enforcement powers; it cannot issue subpoenas or compel testimony. Use of mediation is entirely voluntary. In short, the Service exists for the sole purpose of assisting those who are willing to use its facilities to settle their differences, if not amicably, at least peaceably, without resort to the economic weapons of the strike or lockout.

Let me dispose of the "voluntary arbitration" part of our statutory mandate at the outset. My office maintains a roster of qualified arbitrators, whose names are submitted, usually on five- or seven-man panels, to the parties to grievance disputes arising under a collective bargaining agreement which provides for the selection of arbitrators through Federal Mediation and Conciliation facilities. The arbitrators on our roster are private citizens who are chosen and paid by the parties. Our arbitration records are not confidential. All arbitration awards received by the Service are released for publication by the three labor services, Bureau of National Affairs, Commerce Clearing House, and Prentice-Hall, unless the parties themselves agree that they should not be published. Since arbitration is a private juridical process, created by contract between the parties themselves, we feel that the awards belong to the parties, and that they are therefore entitled to prohibit publication. So much for our arbitration function. The balance of my testimony will relate solely to mediators' reports, letters, and memoranda involving contract negotiation or other disputes in which the bulk of the Service's work is done.

The tasks of mediation and conciliation are carried out by a field staff of about 250 professional mediators who are located in 7 regional offices and numerous 1- and 2-man duty stations throughout the industrial centers of the country. For the most part, mediators work alone, whenever and wherever the parties to an industrial dispute are willing to use their services. Each year, the mediation staff of the agency actively participates in the settlement of about 7,000 disputes; it maintains telephone or other contact with the parties to about 13,000 other contract negotiations; it receives notice of the pendency of about 80,000 other disputes every year in which the parties do not require any third party assistance in order to achieve peaceful settlements.

Time will not permit a detailed description of the mediator's art this afternoon. It is enough to say that in the negotiations in which the Federal Service actively participates, our mediators serve as a kind of catalyst in whose presence agreements can be reached. They sometimes do nothing more than soothe tempers; they sometimes serve as a transmission belt for ideas and proposals between parties whose emotions are so engaged by the pressures of the moment that they cannot fruitfully participate in joint meetings; they sometimes serve as sounding boards for proposals; frequently they suggest alternatives to proposals which they know will be unacceptable unless changed, watered down, or restated; they sometimes are told in advance that one or another party would be receptive to a particular proposal, even