

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Joseph W. Ramsey and I am a vice president of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers. I am also cochairman, with Mr. Michael Fox, for the handling of the current wage and rules movement of the 137,000 railroad shopmen.

The Executive Council of the AFL-CIO Railway Employees' Department, 220 South State Street, Chicago, Ill., negotiates for the railroad shopcrafts and I appear before you today on their behalf.

The six unions (seven crafts) comprising this executive council are the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers & Helpers; Sheet Metal Workers' International Association; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Brotherhood Railway Carmen of America; and International Brotherhood of Fireman & Oilers.

I might at this moment call attention to the fact that we have caused the distribution along with our statement to the members of your committee a booklet entitled, "What is Wrong With Job Evaluation," and also a transcript of the minutes taken at a meeting with the two members of the Emergency Board panel that was held shortly after their report and recommendation was made.

We do not intend that this would be incorporated as a part of this record, but we made this distribution for the information of the members of this committee.

On behalf of the members of all these organizations, I wish to express our most vigorous opposition to the administration's bill, House Joint Resolution 559. This bill, if enacted, will rob the railroad shopcraft employees of their right to strike for a period running as long as December 31, 1968, and covering the most basic terms of their pay and working conditions.

At the same time that it robs our members of their only economic weapon—the right to strike, this bill imposes no comparable penalty of any kind on the railroad corporations which have refused for nearly a year now to settle our 1966 requests for better pay and conditions. That is surely not fair and equitable legislation.

Spokesmen for the administration have said this is not a compulsory arbitration bill. As to that assertion, I can only repeat what Mr. Leighty told you last Thursday. He said it is compulsory arbitration; I say it is and the people we represent say it is.

What this bill proposes is a long step toward dictatorship—with the Government using the threat of prison to make the railroad shopmen labor for less pay than they themselves could win by the exercise of their economic strength. And the effect of this is to increase the profits of the private railroad corporations. Is that the American way? It sounds to us more like a slave enterprise system than a free enterprise system.

Let me say that I asked our attorney how this bill, if enacted, would be enforced. He told me it would undoubtedly be enforced by some Federal judge issuing an injunction. And that injunction would be enforced by contempt of court orders, with the judge empowered to throw any strikers into prison or to fine them heavily or both.

Of course, we have had more than a taste already of Government by injunction, in the railway labor movement. In fact, it was an