

The Panel's 6-percent proposal in terms of total money payments over the 18 months comes out to just about the same as the 5 percent plus 2½ percent negotiated by the four nonoperating unions—as the Mediation Panel was well aware.

However, on June 30, 1968, it would leave our members 1½ percent behind the four nonops—and doubtless even further behind the other organizations that will negotiate new increases to take effect next January 1, for they certainly are not going to settle for a 1968 pay increase of 2½ percent.

As I said a few minutes ago, we do not subscribe to the "pattern" approach. But the railroad negotiators most certainly do. It is easy to foresee that if we settle now for the 6 percent 18 month increase proposed by the Presidential mediators, the railroads will raise a great fuss in the summer of 1968 to try to make us settle the next round for the same percentage "pattern" as the other unions then settle for—whereas that would in fact leave our members at least 1½ percent behind the others.

Thus, this 18-month proposal holds the seeds for considerable disagreement in the summer of 1968. We think the mediators made a mistake in proposing this and that a 2-year wage agreement running through the full year 1968 would be preferable. Such an agreement should carry one general increase as of January 1, 1967, and a second general increase as of January 1, 1968.

So far I have focused on the general wage increase, because even the most extreme advocates of the "pattern" approach—even the President's Council of Economic Advisers, who want to impose a single general "pattern" on the whole Nation—conceded that special inequity adjustments fall outside the scope of the "pattern."

The Emergency Board in our current dispute also clearly recognized this, as regards the inequity adjustment for the skilled shopmen. The Emergency Board stated, under the heading "The Wage Compression of Skilled Shop Craft Employees":

An equitable adjustment beyond the pattern settlement would not violate existing Administration policy against inflationary wage increases because the type of adjustment here sought is compatible with the principles of wage equity stated by the Council of Economic Advisers. (Report, Emergency Board No. 169, page 9.)

Surely, considering that this inequity for the skilled shopmen now admittedly stands between 40 and 60 cents an hour, our proposal for a "downpayment" of 12½ cents in 1967 and 12½ cents in 1968 toward closing the inequity is not unreasonable.

Yet the only hard cash money the railroads have offered to consider on this so far, after nearly a year, is one thin nickel. I suggest to you again that the railroads up to now have not wanted to settle this dispute. They want a law, not a settlement.

I close with one final thought: If the Congress will only make plain to the railroads that their employees still have the fundamental democratic right to strike—if you will only let us keep up our strike notice for 12:01 a.m. on June 19—then the railroad negotiators will finally at long last, come and bargain seriously with us, and we shall soon settle this dispute fairly and no railroad strike will take place.

The way to accomplish this is to reject House Joint Resolution 559 and any similar legislation aimed at abolishing our right to strike.