

RAILROAD LABOR DISPUTE

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1967

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Harley O. Staggers (chairman) presiding.

Mr. FRIEDEL (presiding). The committee will come to order.

We will continue hearings on House Joint Resolution 559, to provide for the settlement of the labor dispute between certain carriers by railroad and certain of their employees.

Our first witness will be the Honorable Andrew J. Biemiller, director, Department of Legislation, AFL-CIO.

STATEMENT OF ANDREW J. BIEMILLER, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS; ACCOMPANIED BY THOMAS E. HARRIS, ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE AFL-CIO

Mr. BIEMILLER. Mr. Chairman, my name is Andrew J. Biemiller. I am legislative director of the AFL-CIO. Accompanying me is Thomas E. Harris, associate general counsel of the AFL-CIO. We appear here on behalf of that organization.

The position of the AFL-CIO on the legislation proposed by the administration was set forth in a statement issued by President Meany on May 4. That statement is as follows:

In the final analysis, the legislative proposal contained in the President's message on the rail situation terminates in compulsory arbitration. The AFL-CIO is steadfastly opposed to the denial of the right to strike through the imposition of terms and conditions of employment otherwise unacceptable to the parties. We shall therefore vigorously oppose this as well as any other legislative proposal which calls for compulsory arbitration of the issues in dispute.

The workers involved in this dispute are simply seeking to exercise the rights assured them under present law. If there is a paramount public interest in the continued operation of the railroads, sufficient to override the rights and freedoms of the workers employed by these private corporations, then the railroads should be operated for the public interest and not for private profit. We would therefore regard seizure legislation, pending the negotiation of a settlement, as the fairest and least oppressive alternative.

We are convinced that the only thing now standing in the way of an early negotiated settlement of this dispute is the belief of the railroad lobby that compulsory arbitration legislation will be forthcoming to relieve them of the obligation to bargain in good faith.

This statement of President Meany was unanimously endorsed and adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on May 9, 1967.