

RAILROAD LABOR DISPUTE

[Telegram]

HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
Washington, D.C.:

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 5, 1967.

The AFL-CIO, Maritime Trades Department—speaking on behalf of its 36 affiliated national and international unions and their more than 5½ million members—vigorously opposes the administration scheme designed to suspend the democratic rights of trade unionists in the current railroad dispute.

The administration is engaging in a dangerous game of words when it tries to convince the American people that its so-called plan for "mediation to finality" does not intrude on the freedom of collective bargaining. By any name, this is compulsory arbitration—rammed down the throats of unions which have been patient beyond belief in their dealings with a recalcitrant management.

For months, the railroad industry has frustrated free collective bargaining. It has stubbornly refused to enter into any meaningful negotiations with the legal union representatives of its employees. Rail management has made no bones about wanting nothing less than the ultimate weapon—compulsion. The blockades that the industry has erected to free collective bargaining have been designed to force Congress to enact such an undemocratic law. The White House now seeks to reward management for its destruction of free bargaining by giving them what they have always sought.

At any point along the way, had Congress or the White House made it quite plain that railroad workers—like other American workers—were entitled to the right to withhold their services, the rail dispute would never have reached the present crisis stage. Faced with the reality that the rail unions could strike, after exhausting all of the procedures of the Railway Labor Act, the industry long ago would have come to the bargaining table and the two sides could have hammered out their differences.

Up to now, management has had no incentive to sit down and bargain—indeed, its incentive has been to stay away from the table in order to increase its pressure on the Congress and the administration to come up with compulsory legislation that works to the disadvantage of free trade unionists.

Even at this late hour, Congress can make the only sensible contribution to ending this impossible situation by rejecting compulsory arbitration, by whatever name, and by affirming the right of free railroad workers to strike. Faced with the inevitable, management would quickly come to terms with its workers—and the cause of free collective bargaining would best be served.

We urge you, then, to repudiate this move by rail management to make the Government of the United States its not-so-silent partner at the bargaining table. The power and prestige of the Government should not be made a servant of the rail industry. The proposal by the President should not be accepted—for it would destroy the freedom of one group of workers, make the freedom of all workers less secure, and, in the end, it would endanger the freedoms of all Americans.

MARITIME TRADES DEPARTMENT, AFL-CIO,
PAUL HALL,

President.

PETER M. MCGAVIN,

Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

[Telegram]

Representative HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
Chairman, House Commerce Committee, House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.:

NEW YORK, N.Y., May 10, 1967.

The international officers of the Transport Workers Union of American, AFL-CIO, representing 150,000 members throughout the Nation, strongly urge that you reject President Johnson's strike ban proposal to force compulsory arbitration on the Nation's railroad shopcraft workers. Such repressive legislation deprives them of their rights and compels them to remain working under substand-