

Mr. MACDONALD. Then what is the benefit to your membership, your union membership, who are the employees of the company, so that they would vote unanimously for this bill?

Mr. FORTNER. Well, I think the benefit, as I have stated in my testimony, in our opinion it is regulation and would impose additional expense on the company. We, and myself as chairman of the committee and other members of the negotiating committee, are charged with the responsibility of trying to get a little more money for wages and better working conditions. I think that is the primary thing. We just do not see any need for it.

Mr. MACDONALD. Actually, if there were—and I don't say that there will be—but if there were additional expenses, wouldn't that be passed on to the consumer?

Mr. FORTNER. Yes.

Mr. MACDONALD. So it really wouldn't have anything to do with your wages.

Mr. FORTNER. No, sir; no, sir. But it would have something to do with the consumer. The greater part of the consumers are the working people and I am a representative of the working people. I mean, just to spend the money and raise the membership's electric rates falls in the same category as throwing union funds away and having to raise their dues. We are charged with the responsibility of looking out for that.

Mr. MACDONALD. Mr. Brotzman.

Mr. BROTZMAN. I would like to thank this gentleman for appearing here. We are glad to have you appear before our committee. I was interested in one sentence particularly in which you point out that the price paid per kilowatt-hour by residential customers has been reduced about one-third since 1956.

Mr. FORTNER. Yes.

Mr. BROTZMAN. That does not just mean the customers of Florida Power & Light Co., but is extensive throughout the State of Florida; is it?

Mr. FORTNER. No, sir. This pertains only to the consumers of Florida Power & Light Co. I have access to those figures.

Mr. BROTZMAN. Your position is, as I understand it, you speak for your organization which was unanimous, but your national union is opposed to that position?

Mr. FORTNER. The national AFL-CIO—and I think the witness list will show that Brother Andy Biemiller will testify 180 degrees out from what I am doing. I would like to clarify one other thing: The Florida Electrical Workers voted unanimously. It is a statewide association of electrical workers and each local union is entitled to send a number of delegates to the association. The association is what voted unanimously to support this legislation, not the rank and file back home.

I did not want you to be misled on that. It was the delegates representing the membership of the Florida Electrical Workers.

Mr. MACDONALD. Actually, I was not misled. I was just curious about it because it is very unusual to have any union vote unanimously.

Mr. FORTNER. Well, we are one of the few.

Mr. MACDONALD. In economic matters there are always a few dissenters who do not want to accept the contract that you might negotiate.