

Radio Talk, April 26, 1941  
Albert Gore

Good Morning, Friends:

~~Americans have~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~one must~~ only call the roll of the ~~nineteen~~ <sup>fit</sup> nations which now suffer the misery of subjugation to ~~realize~~ <sup>abhor</sup> the ponderous step of the dictator and his continuing march against the homelands and the principles of freedom. Yet, in ~~the~~ <sup>United States</sup> ~~our Nation~~, our efforts to prepare to defend ourselves and to give effective aid to Great Britain and to other nations fighting the spread of the conflagration is being slowed down and impeded by prolonged industrial strife. In a nationwide speech Thursday night, that great and wise American, <sup>Dr.</sup> Cordell Hull, advised the Nation "to rise in our might and proceed as one man in the herculean task of equipping this nation to the fullest for its self-defense. The energies of those who control the operation of our factories and our machines, together with the labor of those who make and operate the machines, must be devoted to the attainment of maximum production. Each and all", he said, "must work with a sense that what they do or do not do is important in determining whether this country shall be secure. Every part of our vast productive machine that can serve to produce military supplies must be put to that purpose. Individuals and groups have no right at this time to think or act primarily in terms of personal interest to the detriment of the general National good."

President Roosevelt has said that existing law is sufficient to handle the situation, and he has discouraged any legislative action to curtail strikes in National defense industries. Congress has hoped that none would be necessary. Congress has waited, but strikes continue. Congress and the American people have become impatient and the lower House, at any rate, now seems ready to act.

The people of the country have been writing lots of letters to Congress asking why Congress does not act. The labor committee made no effort to report legislation. The Judiciary Committee, which was looked to with <sup>much</sup> hope, has so far reported no legislation, but a man of action has arisen. In 1914, a strapping young man, <sup>29</sup> ~~30~~ years of age, was elected to Congress in Georgia. His name, then unknown except to his home people, was Carl Vinson. His people have continued to send him to Congress at each election since then. He has arisen in their esteem and ~~he~~ has attracted the attention of the entire country and <sup>he</sup> has so impressed his colleagues that for ten years he has been Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee. Perhaps more than any other man, with the possible exception of the President, Chairman Vinson is responsible for America now having the greatest navy afloat. Congressman Vinson was disturbed about the slow-ups in national defense caused by strikes, and he introduced a bill for the purpose of guaranteeing uninterrupted production of naval equipment. The Committee of which he is Chairman, however, broadened his bill to include strikes in all national defense industry. This bill, known as the Vinson Bill, will very likely be acted upon by the House during the coming week.

Friends, you are now to have the privilege of hearing this great American, the Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, the Honorable Carl Vinson.

Congressman Vinson: -

Mr. Vinson: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Radio Audience:

If I interpret public opinion correctly, the American people are deeply concerned over unnecessary, yet greatly harmful, interruptions caused by strikes



in our National defense program. Our country can not defend itself against enemies from without if it is faced with industrial warfare, or even the threat of industrial warfare at home. Upon my responsibility as a member of Congress and as Chairman of *1st Kavaloofzais* *H. R.* ~~one of its great~~ committees, I introduced ~~House~~ Resolution 4139, which has been favorably reported to the House by the ~~House~~ Naval Affairs Committee, and I have asked the rules committee to grant a rule for its consideration.

The effect of the bill is to provide for a mediation of disputes first and if the parties can not agree, then the strike can occur if mediation fails. The President has by executive order already created a Board to deal with this problem, but, without trying in any way to reflect upon the Board's efforts in settling strikes, there has not been a single strike which the Board prevented.

The purposes of the bill are:

First, to create adequate machinery and procedures for the mediation and adjustment of labor disputes affecting the national-defense program in order that that program will not be interrupted by unnecessary strikes and lock-outs;

Second, to give statutory recognition to the National Defense Mediation Board created by Executive order of the President;

Third, to confer on that board by statute virtually the same powers and duties, and to impose on employers and employees virtually the same obligations,

as are provided for in the President's Executive order;

Fourth, to provide by statute a national policy with respect to labor disputes affecting naval contractors and thus render inapplicable conflicting State legislation in the same field,

Fifth, to treat the strike-breeding question of the closed shop in the same manner as that question was treated by President Wilson in creating the National War Labor Board.

Most of the proposals that have been made relating to strikes in defense industries have one thing in common. They all propose to create additional procedures for the mediation and conciliation of labor disputes affecting defense production and to create a central agency to carry these procedures into effect. It is fortunate that in determining what these procedures should be and how to make them effective Congress does not have to break new ground or to proceed by the slow and costly method of trial and error. That method was used, and necessarily so, in another field, with the result that prior to the enactment in 1926 of the Railway Labor Act, some extremely costly and crippling strikes took place on the Nation's transportation system. The suffering and inconvenience throughout the United States, the terrible cost to the United States and to its people, resulting from these strikes, resulted because there was no adequate procedure for bringing the parties together to settle their differences, no duty imposed by law on either party to make a reasonable effort to settle these differences amicably, or to make and maintain agreements covering the various terms and conditions of employment

and providing for the amicable settlement of disputes that might arise in the future. The railroads and the railroad employees can be justly proud of the fact that by reason of their cooperation, legislation was enacted in 1926 and 1934 creating adequate procedures for the voluntary settlement of such disputes, and in order to make those procedures effective, creating obligations which never before had been imposed by law of the United States on employers or employees. That act, as amended in 1934, has one primary and all-important purpose - to avoid any interruption to the continued operation of the country's rail system of transportation.

The employees' right to organize and bargain collectively undominated and uninfluenced by their employers is enforced by the application of criminal penalties against the carrier. Experience under the Railway Labor Act has demonstrated that both carriers and their employees have in large measure cooperated in complying with their obligations under the act despite the lack of the usual enforcement provisions.

The American people are requesting - yes, demanding - a similar cooperation between defense contractors and their employees in order to effectuate the consideration and passage of a bill to prevent interruptions to the defense program caused by strikes and lock-outs. Cooperation is essential if that program is to succeed and America is to remain strong. The President, in his address to Congress on January 6, spoke the overwhelming sentiment of the American people when he said:

"A free nation has the right to expect full cooperation from all groups.

A free nation has the right to look to the leaders of business, of labor,



and of agriculture to take the lead in stimulating effort, not among other groups, but within their own groups."

The American people have a right to expect that such cooperation will be forthcoming in connection with the effort, expressed in this bill to create procedures for conciliation and mediation of labor disputes between defense contractors and their employees.

The bill is patterned upon the Railway Labor Act of 1926, as amended in 1934. There is no question but that in attempting to create and make effective the conciliation and mediation procedures proposed, obligations and restrictions not now applicable are necessary, just as similar obligations and restrictions are necessary under the Railway Labor Act. There is no question but that labor is asked by the bill to postpone, during the conciliation and mediation efforts, the exercise of its right to strike. There is no question but that employers are asked to postpone, during the conciliation and mediation efforts, the exercise of their right to lock-out and of their right to lower wages and lengthen hours and make other changes in the conditions of employment. There is no question but that labor again is asked in the present defense emergency, to permit those who are willing and anxious to work for the defense of their country to do so without joining a labor organization.

Many cases have come to our attention just recently where individuals who have been unemployed for months and years, and who have been anxious to do their part in building up the defenses of this country, have been prevented from doing so,

have been prevented from working to fulfill Government defense contracts, unless they first became members of a particular labor organization and unless they paid in some cases as much as \$1,500 initiation fees. These disclosures have shocked the American people, and this Congress is going to insist, and the American people are going to insist, that during the present emergency union membership shall not be made a condition of any individual's employment in the service of his country.

Something can be done to facilitate the settlement of disputes giving rise to these strikes, something has been done, and done successfully, to facilitate the settlement of railway labor disputes, and something out to be done, and done now, creating similar procedures for labor disputes affecting the whole national defense program.

"I have you"