

NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

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# DOCK STRIKE VS. PUBLIC INTEREST

By  
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Wheat and feed grain producers have again been forced to bear the brunt of a transportation industry strike. Last year the railway strike interrupted the movement of grain. This time, the dock strikes have held up shipping, and during an especially critical time to the farmer, the fall feed grains harvest.

These strikes have severely hindered the difficult job of strengthening our nation's economy, seriously hurting manufacturers, shippers, their employees, and especially, the American agricultural producer. Kansas farmers have seen some of their wheat export markets appropriated by Canada and Australia. In recent weeks, midwestern farmers have witnessed corn prices drop 50 cents as a result of the striking dock workers.

## Pending Legislation

The tragedy of this situation rests with the Congress and its ability but refusal to enact legislation to treat transportation strikes in a way that both the unions and the public interest can receive fair consideration. Presently there is legislation pending that could have prevented the dock strikes and would have forestalled the long series of crises in the railway industry. In February, I introduced with Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, Senate Bill 560, the Emergency Public Interest Protection Act.

Balancing the rights of free collective bargaining with the public needs, the measure would provide new tools for the President to employ in resolving transportation industry disputes when the nation's safety or health is imperiled. In addition to the provisions of the Taft-Hartly Labor-Management Act, S.B. 560 would empower the President to apply one of the three new options. They could be used if the dispute remained unresolved after the 80-day cooling off period provided by the Taft Hartly Act.

(more on back)



### New Options for Strike Settlement

\*One option would be to extend the 80-day period an additional 30 days. Some disputes require only a little more time for resolution.

\*A second option would arrange for partial operation of an industry. Limiting operations to essential segments of industries, or limiting services to critical segments of customers, would be appropriate steps in some cases.

\*A third option would require both parties to submit final proposals for full resolution of the dispute. If a party fails to make a final offer or offers, the last one made during the bargaining would be deemed final. This option has the virtue of providing finality, yet not containing those aspects of compulsory arbitration that are inconsistent with free collective bargaining.

### Stable Transportation Industry Would Benefit All

This legislation neither favors nor discriminates against any group or interest. Rather, its enactment would bring to the transportation industry a measure of stability to bear in labor-management relations. A stable and reliable system would contribute to the prosperity of almost every segment of our society and economy. It would be of particular value to the American farmer, who is so vitally dependent upon transportation.

Although for many years the Congress has failed to tackle any important labor-management relations legislation, the Emergency Public Interest Protection Act has been given hearings this Session by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Additional hearings are expected soon. I have testified in support of the bill and am hopeful that the Senate Committee responds favorably to the measure; and that subsequently, my colleagues in the Senate vote to give the public interest adequate means for the protection it deserves.