

[C.1959]

SUMMARY OF SENATE FLOOR ACTION ON S. 1555 BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC)

The Senate was engaged in heated debate all last week, holding several night sessions and meeting also on Saturday afternoon, over the Kennedy-Ervin Labor Reform Bill. As reported to the Senate floor from the Labor Committee, the bill was described by Senator McClellan, chief of the labor racketeer investigators, as being totally inadequate. To make even this rubber tooth reform part acceptable to the union bosses, however, the committee added some sweetening provisions which would further increase the power of the bosses at the expense of the workers and the public. The bill as reported by the Labor Committee, had it been passed without amendment, would have been a fraud on the public and the workers demanding reform.

Although the bill still does not fulfill the needs as pointed up by Senator McClellan and his investigating committee, amendments were adopted on the Senate floor which make the bill worthy of passage as a commendable step in the right direction. I hope the House will improve the bill further.

Although the bill, as reported by committee, was a sham as far as any real reform was concerned, the committee included several amendments weakening Taft-Hartley in Title VI of the bill in order to obtain support from labor leaders for the bill. The first amendment offered by Senator Ervin of North Carolina was to strike the entirety of this Section. This amendment should have been adopted, but, unfortunately, we were defeated.

Fortunately, we were able to amend, to some extent, some of the Title VI "sweetening" to make it slightly less objectionable.

Among the innumerable amendments adopted, most of which were substantial, were ones redefining "labor organization," tightening reporting requirements, requiring notice to be given of union elections, insuring the right of union members to inspect union books, establishing a fiduciary relationship between union officers and members, increasing the penalty for shakedown picketing, limiting the right of replaced strikers to vote after a reasonable lapse of time, redefining union officers and labor relations consultants, requiring bonding of those handling union money, outlawing hot-cargo clauses and limiting recognition picketing. There were many others.

The most important amendment adopted was Senator McClellan's "Bill of Rights" for labor union members, which was approved initially by a one-vote margin. It later had to be modified, however, after gross exaggerations were made in an effort to bring so-called civil rights questions into the amendment. The whole matter was an attempt to mollify the union bosses for political purposes even to the point of trying to cause political embarrassment to a great American and Southern Statesman, Senator McClellan, who has unflinchingly devoted his efforts to the best interest of the South, the working man, and the American public.

These gross exaggerations of the possible effects of parts of the "Bill of Rights" amendment were utilized to effectively corral enough votes to recommit or kill the reform bill, if the amendment were not revised. I joined Senator McClellan in supporting the revision, which still contained effective reform measures, and I co-sponsored with Senator Ervin a jury trial amendment to the retained injunctive features in other parts of the bill to insure that the bill would not be defeated to the delight of Mr. Hoffa and other union hoodlums.

Our jury trial amendment was essential even had the McClellan "Bill of Rights" not been adopted. It was made neither more nor less essential by either the adoption or modification of the McClellan amendment. The power to convict without jury trial for contempt was part and parcel of the bill as reported by the Committee, and indeed, was one of the innumerable weaknesses of the bill that has been corrected by the Senate with floor amendments.

I hope that the House will adopt effective amendments to outlaw the hoodlums' weapons of secondary boycotts and organizational and recognition picketing, to remove the bill's exemptions from reporting requirements, and to tighten up the other provisions of the bill, all of which were offered in the Senate and rejected. I favored all of these amendments, which are in the interest of the working man and the public.