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RESPONSIBILITY OF LABOR TO INDUSTRY

26 October 1950

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Publication No. L51-77

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

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Mr. Elmer Everett Walker, was born on 24 October 1900 in Louisville, Kentucky. He has been an active orthodox trade-unionist since 13 March 1918, when he joined Lodge 121 of the International Association of Machinists, the largest independent trade-union in the United States. He has been a national field representative for the Department of Labor on machine tools and machinery manufacturing. He has been an independent labor consultant to Vice-Chairman Keenan of the War Production Board; also labor consultant to the Smaller War Plants Corporation. He has also been a member of War Labor Board Shipbuilding Committee. Presently he is General Vice-President of International Association of Machinists with Headquarters in Washington.

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MAJOR McLAY: General Holman and fellow students: Thus far in the Manpower Course we have heard from Dr. Lorimer how men are measured quantitatively, that is, in numbers. How do you count them? We have heard from Dr. Marquis how they are measured qualitatively. What do they do and how do you get them to do it? We have been told by Colonel Tally how manpower requirements are generated. We have heard from Mr. Fanning what the responsibility of the uniformed services toward the manpower segment of our population may be. All of these measurements, however, have been in cold and very impersonal tones and descriptions. They have specifically omitted the feelings of the people involved.

Today we are going to depart from the impersonal approach and learn what the workingman thinks his responsibility is to his fellow man, and how his leaders regard this responsibility.

To tell us this we are quite fortunate in having a very senior and learned labor leader. His union, the International Association of Machinists, I believe, has made outstanding efforts to establish the practice that the coin of industrial relations has two sides to it, which may best be expressed by saying that with labor gains goes responsibility.

Our speaker this morning, Mr. Walker, has also been a director of labor relations for one of the very large sugar companies on the west coast. His experience comes from representing both labor and management. Without further delay I will introduce to you the General Vice-President of the International Association of Machinists, Mr. Elmer Everett Walker.

MR. WALKER: General Holman, Major McLay, and gentlemen: I want to begin by saying this is the first opportunity that has ever been afforded me to speak to such a distinguished group of officers of our armed forces. It is most encouraging to know that those responsible for the security of our Nation are concerned with our views. I think all of you will agree with me that, in one form or another, labor organizations and labor leaders have been from time to time rather prominently mentioned in varying terms both over the radio and through the newspapers. So, after I have completed my talk and have left, you will have had the opportunity of seeing and hearing one of the so-called labor leaders. You also will have had the opportunity of determining whether or not I have horns or am a menace to the United States. And frankly, I add quickly, I am not, neither are my associates.

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The president of our organization, Mr. Hayes, has lectured at some of these meetings. In order to avoid any possibility of repetition I learned from Mr. Hayes, the subjects which he discussed. The subject which has been assigned to me is one which has not been too fully covered by Mr. Hayes on any previous occasion.

As Major McLay advised you, my background includes not only work within a labor organization, but also several years as director of labor relations for the second largest manufacturer of beet sugar in the United States. I look back on that work as a very pleasant experience. The experience gained while working in that successful company has proved most valuable to me when considering the adoption of new policies and procedures for the operation of our Association at all levels.

I will say to you quite frankly that, even though some in organized labor do not agree with me that an organization which represents 600,000 workers in more than 200 lines of American industry, as does our organization, and all other like it have a very important role and responsibility to our Nation. We are what might be called "big business" in that field. If we are big business, it behooves us to conduct ourselves in a manner which will best serve our membership and all others in the community.

I have not come here with a chip on my shoulder. It is my hope that what I have to say will contribute to better understanding of the thinking of people representing organized labor.

More than 33 years ago, I joined the International Association of Machinists as an apprentice. My application for membership was not prompted by any complaint against the employer for whom I worked. I joined for the same basic reason that one of you would join or associate himself with an officers' club or officers' organization. I believed then that having elected to learn the trade of machinist and toolmaker I ought to associate myself with those people and become familiar with all ramifications of the trade I had chosen to follow.

After joining, many years passed before I obtained employment in a shop covered by a collective-bargaining agreement. I mention this fact merely to emphasize what motivated me to become a member of this great craft union. Since then we have departed from the strict craft lines, the evolution of American industry has made this inevitable. I am disturbed as I know you must be over the approach of some to finding a proper solution to the very real human relations in American industry, especially since 1934.

The reasoning too often advanced that in 1933 or 1934, with the enactment of the Labor Relations Act, people were given the right to organize. We always had that right. It was never denied us. It is a

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fact that we had considerable more difficulty while organizing in days gone by, however, I think those experiences tended to mold men who today have the responsibility of leading and guiding people, who are coming into industry and ultimately into labor organizations. The experiences we had and those of the men who went before us have proved valuable to all of us in carrying out our duties and responsibilities to the public and those we represent. Better understanding on the part of all of us cannot escape being reflected in the amount of production which will flow from our defense plants as it did during World War II.

The responsibility of organized workers in our defense or war economy is not different from the responsibility of any other citizen of this country. In fact, unless you have been told that an individual is a member of a trade-union, you have no way of differentiating between him and any other citizen of this country so far as his responsibility is concerned. You might well ask, What is the responsibility of members of any fraternal organization or church in our defense program? As I look out on this gathering, I would not even hazard a guess as to which fraternal or religious organizations you men are associated with. Regardless of this fact our responsibilities to our Nation are the same whether organized or unorganized, military or civilian. The great responsibility of organized labor, I think, rests on the shoulders of the leaders of these organizations in very much the same manner that responsibilities in our military forces rest on the shoulders of you men. Some day, no doubt, the men sitting here within the sound of my voice will occupy leadership roles comparable to other men who have been called to lead our Nation in times such as are already recorded in our Nation's history--Grant, Sherman, Pershing, Eisenhower, and many others. Tremendous responsibility rests on the shoulders of our military leaders and the men who work with them down through the various echelons.

Our organization, in a sense, follows somewhat the pattern of organization within the armed forces. Responsibility is delegated to officers of various rank clear down to the individual member in the local lodge, wherever it may be. It is comparable, in a way, to the youngest recruit or buck private. We, through our channels, are in a position, I am happy to say, within a matter of minutes at times, but at the most a few hours, within the jurisdiction of our union, to reach out through those channels and correct, suggest, recommend, or bring about conditions which will correct any happening that may adversely affect the prestige of our organization with an employer with whom we do business, and which may effect our war or defense program.

Organization is our business. In this talk I am referring to our (the machinist) organization. I could just as easily be talking about the organized labor structure as a whole, however, for the purpose of discussion it is best that I confine myself to the subject on which I am best informed. It is inevitable that after more than 30 years of membership in the Machinists' Union I should learn something about its history, laws, policies, practices, and procedures.

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We have 1,800 local lodges in our International Union. They are spread throughout the entire United States. We also have lodges in Hawaii, Canada, Alaska, and the Canal Zone. It is our responsibility to utilize that structure in every way possible to enhance and improve the interests of our membership. The more than 600 representatives we have in the field are men who are in contact with our entire membership, and the representatives and members of other labor organizations. Now, or in any war emergency, they utilize that structure in every way possible to further our defense or war program.

How do we do it? Well, of course, in order for us to help those responsible for our war or defense program, there certainly must be a willingness or a desire to have us help them. Our services and assistance definitely should be welcome. We cannot impose ourselves upon those responsible and in positions of authority, whether in the White House or in the local plant or office. We can certainly make known to the people responsible that we are ready and willing and would be only too happy to serve and help.

The following are a few examples of our efforts to serve during World War II. In the recruitment of men to man our railroad battalions, naturally the machinists from our railroads had to be recruited. We have agreements with every one of the standard railroads in the United States and Canada. The machinists employed by these railroads are members of our association--at least 90 percent of them. As a result of pleas to our members to join these railroad battalions, we are certain many of our members did join up. Quite frankly though we have not made a selfish check; it was our duty.

Well, as I say, we were helpful at that time. And I want to add, as I enumerate these, that we again stand ready to help and are at present cooperating in a similar sense with our defense program. During the last war we assisted the Army Transportation Corps, which was, if I remember correctly, under General Somervell, in recruiting mechanics for the repair units which were organized and which rendered such fine service on our far-flung war fronts. The automobile machinist is one of the skilled branches of our organization. We have more than 90,000 under agreement--automobile dealers, trucking companies, over-the-road haulers, bakeries, dairies, all men who have the necessary know-how. When the Army was endeavoring to recruit special men to help man these units, the record will show that we sent the specifications and other information to our local lodges, urging our members to enlist in order that the full benefit of their skill and training could be used where it was so urgently needed. We cooperated in the recruitment of men for the Seabees. We cooperated with General Groves in recruiting men for the Hanford and other atomic projects.

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There are many different ways in which we helped. We also cooperated in the shipbuilding program. Our people are involved. Our people are the ones who, along with thousands of others, are doing the work. The whole job is one, as you men know better than I do because the men in our armed forces know the importance of teamwork, where every man performs his own duty in order to insure a successful operation. We know unless that is followed, unless that is at all times uppermost in the minds of the men who are doing it, the success we hope for will not be ours.

I want to say now that contrary to the belief of some people, we in organized labor especially the International Association of Machinists are vitally interested in the success of the managements with whom we deal. There are more than 12,000 of them with whom we have agreements in more than 240 different types of American industry. (You can well conceive of machinists being employed clear across the whole economy.)

Those employers are the people for whom our membership works and earns their wages and enjoys their vacations. Unless those managements earn a fair profit, they cannot long remain in business. At this point I will put in what we say openly: "Unreasonable profits in excess of what they are entitled to at the expense of the consumer and the citizens of the United States." We take issue there. But as for the fair and reasonable profit, an employer with whom any union deals is entitled to it and in fact must realize that profit or else it cannot remain in business. Good business does not call for the continuing use of red ink.

We certainly have in the past, are at present, and will in the future continue to work with those managements that signify a willingness to work with us and not draw the conclusion we are endeavoring to take over their business. The machinists' organization has a job big enough in itself without trying to take over the operation of any business.

Our organization has not lost faith in our free-enterprise system. We have argued long and loud at times about the manner in which it has operated. We know that should we lose our free-enterprise system in the United States with it would go our free trade-union movement. A free trade-union can operate only where there is the kind of freedom which we enjoy in our Nation.

Many of the books that have recorded the rise and fall of free nations, and especially those in which trade-unions existed have invariably revealed the fact that conquerors or would-be conquerors made their first bid by seizing control of, and finally destroying, organizations of workers whether unions or fraternal organizations. Workers are too easily influenced to follow such dictators, especially when the economic system under which

they live fails to provide them with work to earn wages to adequately feed, house, clothe, and educate their families.

The unions which have fallen prey to or have accepted dictators, thinking they would provide the solution to their problems, have experienced a sad awakening to find that their freedom as free functioning, trade-unions has disappeared. Reflect on the record of Hitler, for instance. The unions in Germany at one time were the strongest and most completely organized labor movement on the face of the globe. Hitler succeeded in gaining the confidence of many of the German labor leaders, who later were thrown into concentration camps, or were decimated with hundreds of others. The working masses of Germany were thereafter required to work wherever, when, and under whatever conditions were dictated to them. All of us I am certain agree, it must not happen here.

In our present world situation, the Taft-Hartley law requires me, as one individual in the United States, to sign an affidavit swearing that I am not a Communist. I reaffirm that oath I am not now nor have I ever been a Communist. As a matter of fact, I am one of those within our organization who has waged a relentless fight on the infiltration of fellow travelers into our organization. We have stood them off. Our law is tight. Each of you are invited to examine our Grand Lodge constitution which you will find bars members, advocates, and supporters of all "isms" except Americanism as we know it. We will gladly furnish each of you with a copy of the constitution for study and complete examination. Even though our laws seem adequate they still do not provide an absolute guarantee that "Commies" and their supporters cannot gain membership; they have no scruples when it come to lying, so naturally they disavow any connection or support of these philosophies when making application for membership.

Yes, some have gained membership and I am satisfied some are in our organization right now. They join key unions like the machinists for one purpose only--to disrupt and destroy, to be effective they soon reveal themselves to us and from that point on it's a matter of time until they are unmasked and expelled.

If we catch and expel from our organization a Communist who is employed by "X" company with which we have an agreement containing a union shop clause in accordance with the requirements of the Taft-Hartley law, that very law makes it a legal liability on our union and the employee if he is discharged because he no longer holds union membership which the collective bargaining agreement requires. We cannot go to the employer and say. "This man is no longer a member of our organization because he is a Communist. He advocates the overthrow of our Government by force. We want no part of him. Our people will not work with him, get rid of him."

The Taft-Hartley law, gentlemen, makes our organization liable for money damage to that Communist for time lost as a result of such a discharge. On the other hand, should the employer learn or discover that one of his employees is a "Commie" and notifies him, "Look, Bud, you're a Communist. I'm not going to have you around here because we're producing material for our defense program." That employer, under the Taft-Hartley law as I have previously stated, would be liable for money damages and guilty of an unfair labor practice.

The right of collective bargaining, the right to organize, was ours long before the National Labor Relations Act. Quite frankly, gentlemen, there are many people in organized labor as old as I who are not the least bit bashful about telling the world that they are the Saviour of the working people who have come at last. I turned 50 two days ago, so I have lived a little while. Most of those who are braying so loud today have been doing so only since 1934. Too few of them had the guts and courage to join the fight during the World War I days and the "Roaring Twenties" which followed. My 33 years membership helps me reach such a conclusion. The law did not give us the right to bargain. The law at present does not deny us the right to bargain. There are however, many features of the law about which we are disturbed. I attended a seminar of the Army Air Forces at Maxwell Field back in 1947. While there I had occasion to talk with Senator Hawkes, from New Jersey, who at that time was a member of the Republican Policy Committee. I have no hesitancy in mentioning Senator Hawkes' name because I think he is a very fine gentleman. He was formerly president of the United States Chamber of Commerce and, as you all know, men are not elevated to a position like that unless they possess very fine qualities.

Well, it so hapened I was the only stranger in the crowd, so to speak; the others were industrialists, members of the clergy, and so on. When I say "stranger," I am saying it a little bit facetiously. I was the only labor man in the crowd. On one occasion in the officers' club at Maxwell Field, there was quite a discussion of the Taft-Hartley law. Several were curious to learn of my reaction to that law. Now, this is not a place for profanity so, in some respects, I have to confess what I said on that occasion bordered on the profane side.

During this discussion I asked Senator Hawkes whether he, Bob Taft, and the others who supported the legislation would be willing to propose to the Congress that a law be put on our statute books which would provide that before a Congressman or Senator could be certified as a duly elected representative of the people of his state or district he must have received an affirmative vote of 51 percent of the eligible voters

in his state or district. The senator did not reply and was surprised when I told him that such an undemocratic requirement was in the Taft-Hartley law pertaining to union shop elections. He expressed considerable surprise if not some doubt when told that the following situation could abstain from the law's functioning. For example 100 people are in a bargaining unit and, say 90 of them went to the polls and voted; 50 of them voted for the union-shop provision and 40 of them voted against it, we would be denied the right to obtain a union shop agreement even though there was a majority of 10 voting in favor of the provision.

When this example was outlined to him, he said, "The law does not require that." Needless to say the senator was not too happy when I reminded him of his membership on the Republican Policy Committee of the 80th Congress and was very vociferous in the Senate debate. Senator Hawkes after further checking with his secretary admitted the following day that my example regarding the union shop vote was correct and then added "We will have to do something about that." It is now late 1950 and nothing has been done about it. In addition to our Grand Lodge constitution we will be happy to furnish each of you a copy of our booklet, "Truth and Consequences of the Taft-Hartley Law." You should find it interesting since it is written in the light of the effect of the law's application to situations where human beings (workers) are involved. I can assure you we have endeavored to present the true picture; distortion would not serve any purpose when true facts are so necessary.

The Taft-Hartley law has been referred to in many terms, some even profane, there is justifiable reason for sane criticism. The enactment of the Wagner act after 150 years of our Nation's existence gave a new berth for freedom to our citizens who have known the oppression of employers who had less regard for the rights and welfare of his employees than he had for his machines. This law has renewed almost completely the license of such employers to resume where they had left off.

My first reaction after receiving the invitation to address this class was to decline, some experiences which I have gone through with procurement officers during World War II did not leave me with too much love for our military men, that is, as exemplified by those I refer to.

I am not a veteran of our armed forces; in World War I I was somewhat on the young side and World War II caught me on the other extreme. I make mention of this fact so that you will readily understand how limited my practical knowledge of military affairs and military men really is.

My younger brother spent more than three years in the Pacific theatre, he's now back in civilian life working as a certified accountant. He entered the service as a buck private and graduated as a master sergeant.

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My direct contribution to the armed forces during World War II was a regular blood donation at the Washington Blood center in the Acacia Building. I received two "one gallon"pints so after a fashion I did get overseas--I hope--a pint at a time. For three years I wrote my brother every day, he seemed to welcome news more than anything else. I sent him tear sheets from the Washington papers and the "New York Times." After leaving Camp Callan he arrived in New Zealand and in the course of the war he hopped with his outfits from place to place finally arriving in Osaka, Japan. Now and then he included some interesting evaluations of various officers he served under. He was at all times high in his praise of our West Point officers. He also praised the work of our Navy and Air Force. The combined good work of all our armed forces brought victory to our Nation over Germany and Japan.

I understand another member of the Machinist Union, Mr. Irving Brown, addressed your college a short time ago. He is a close associate and friend of mine. We worked together in the Labor Division of the War Production Board during World War II. Our principal assignment was to work with managements and labor organizations in expediting production of war material, particularly for airframes. I do believe we made some worth-while contributions to President Roosevelt's production program.

In our present mobilization program our association's desire to be helpful is greater than ever before. Mere desire on our part will not help, we must be afforded the opportunity. Human relations often referred to in industry as "labor relations" is our business. It is important that we be given the opportunity to assist in any case where we can be helpful. In any instance where a representative of the armed forces is confronted with a labor relations problem in which our members are involved, there is one of our full-time representatives to whom he can go, and I am certain he will find a sympathetic and cooperative ear. Wherever one is not near at hand, we can at our Washington office quickly locate and put him in touch with the proper office. All of you are urged to avail yourselves of this assistance when in the field. I served only recently on a committee to work with Mr. Symington in the formation of a Mobilization Committee on which industry, agriculture, labor and the public are represented. This type of cooperation is imperative during these perilous days to insure the fulfillment of our mobilization program. We are mindful of the threat to our Nation from across the North Pole. All segments of our Nation must necessarily place our Nation's security ahead of individual or group interests. There must be equality of sacrifice by all of us, no one segment must be made to carry an unequal share and, more important, excessive profiteering from war should be prohibited.

Our national security is entrusted to our military forces. It is our responsibility at home to produce and deliver all of the materials and equipment which may be needed anywhere.

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We in labor are aware that to a boy on the fighting front no "work stoppage" is excusable. I am confident that through understanding reached in discussions such as this, we can eliminate or prevent many such disputes. I frankly admit that some unscrupulous and unreasonable men can be found in labor. The same is also true in management; yes, I'm certain there are some unreasonable members of our military leadership; now and then we also learn of an unscrupulous one among your ranks. I am happy to state that the overwhelming number of those occupying these different types of leadership are honorable men. If there are any among the officers of our armed forces who jump to the conclusion that labor leaders are unmindful of their responsibility, let them stop and think. The representatives of organized labor have their sons, brothers, and daughters in the armed forces. Need I remind you of their interest in their loved ones? So whenever a work stoppage occurs during these critical times, remember there is a reason for it. No man has ever found the solution to a problem without first analyzing that problem, determining its cause, the reason for its developing to that point. You have to analyze it very carefully many times.

One of the first rules I followed in my work in this field--whether with management or with my own union--is to first have the problem at hand clearly before me, then get to the task of determining its cause. Having determined the cause and effect it is not too difficult to decide on the remedy. Sometimes you will find parties to a dispute differing on the "cause" and "effect." If these three steps have been taken, the task of one of you or anyone else acting in a similar role to iron out the difficulty becomes much easier.

Through this procedure facts are developed and responsible men cannot successfully ignore or argue against facts. Now, one of Will Rogers' favorite sayings was, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers." Newspaper accounts, beginning along about 9 April 1950 state that I have been mentioned as one of the labor members of the Wage Stabilization Board to be set up under the Defense Production Act. Everybody--that is except me--seems to know something about it. Although I have received congratulatory wires and communications, I have heard nothing from President Truman who will, I believe, do the appointing.

During World War II I served as a member of the National War Labor Board, the record will reveal it made a worth-while contribution to the War Program. The real tragedy was the disbanding of the Board before our industries had reconverted to peacetime or civilian production. The goal of management and labor should have been to continue their relationship without bitter and costly strikes and strife. I sometimes wonder if we will ever learn. In this important field all too much emphasis is put on corrective measures and virtually none on preventative measures. In the field of human relations, again, there are causes. Set about to eliminate the causes of disputes and misunderstanding and there will be less and less need for corrective measures.

These are good rules to follow in the human relations field. They have aided me in my work regardless of the situation or the number affected. Rules that work well in a situation involving 1 or 10 or 10,000 individuals-- such rules, if followed and used, will contribute to the welfare of our Nation. I think that in any instance when an industrial relations or production problem comes to your attention, you will render a real service to all parties concerned, and more especially to our Nation, if after you have corrected the immediate problem, you will then endeavor to have preventative steps taken to forestall its recurrence.

The opportunity to lecture before the Industrial College should be afforded to as many labor leaders as possible. Better understanding would follow our opportunity for us to address such organizations as the Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, Rotary and Lions whether at the national, state or local level. Mr. Otto Seyferth, who is the president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, is a man with whom we have one of the very best collective bargaining agreements our association has with any employer. That is the best recommendation I can give you for the man who is presently heading the United States Chamber of Commerce. Labor should in turn invite representatives of our armed forces, other government agencies, and the organizations previously mentioned to our conferences and conventions. While representatives of almost all the organizations mentioned have accepted invitations to conferences and conventions of labor, I must confess our agenda have not suffered from overcrowding from representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers.

We have not had enough men from the armed forces attending our conferences. Major General "Rosie" O'Donnell attended one of my staff conferences in Detroit, Michigan. It was after I had attended the seminar down at Maxwell Field. I submit to you that our unions would be most happy to have representatives of our armed forces come in and talk with them, explain your problems and what the branch of service you represent is doing in its behalf--out of knowing more of the facts comes better understanding.

You men know that the armed forces are looked upon by too many people in this country as being a great waste of the taxpayers' money. After the war when we had so much equipment on hand, the disposal of much of this surplus at times bordered on scandal. In South Bend, Indiana, I saw new Pratt-Whitney B-29 engines broken to bits for scrap. Much was made of that in the newspapers out there. One of the reporters inquired what labor's views were to such a program. He was informed that such scrapping was wasteful and then reminded that "war is waste." It was far better that we had a surplus of such items rather than "too little, too late." I would rather see us dropping weights on those engines and breaking them up for scrap after the war than to read in the newspapers during the war that somewhere out in the Pacific, or in Europe our B-29's were grounded because engine replacements were not available. I am reminded of the Confederate General who coined the statement "He who gets there

firstest with the mostest usually wins the battle." Our Nation's ability to deliver the "mostest" was in a large measure the key to our success.

The serious problems confronting us call for management, labor, and government to close ranks and put aside their private and political piques and quarrels in the interest of preserving our free Nation. It must and will be done just as the bitterness and hatreds which followed the Civil War or the War between the States, whichever you prefer, have been overcome. I am familiar with the scars that were left by that war. My Grandfather Walker was a colonel in the Southern Army and my Grandfather King was a buck private in the Indiana Volunteers; he followed Sherman on his tour from Chattanooga to Savannah and then to this City for the "grand parade" after the war's end. He never reconciled himself that his daughter had married the "son of a Reb." Time has healed these scars. It is regrettable that even today there are irresponsible individuals who try to whip up hatred over the issue which caused that conflict. In almost every instance such individuals know virtually nothing of the history of that conflict or the issues. We are a united Nation today, all segments of our economy, necessarily must get solidly behind and remain solidly behind all you men who are manning our first line of defense. I certainly can pledge to you that our association will do our part. We think we have been doing everything possible. We stand ready to increase our efforts and to shoulder our proportionate share of sacrifice to support our armed forces in preserving our free way of life. Unions such as ours can only exist and function in a free nation such as ours.

Few people here on the North American continent, with 7 percent of the world population, realize that the menace which confronts us today is from an area containing 75 percent of the world population. Because of the freedom which we have enjoyed, we have become a great and strong Nation. That freedom must continue if we are to continue to occupy that role among the nations of the world. We cannot continue unless we remain free. So long as there is misunderstanding, fighting, bickering, and the hurling of charges and countercharges between management and labor, that one or the other is attempting to destroy the other, the masters in Moscow will take comfort. I assure you that our union is now and will continue to strive for better understanding of all our Nation's problems.

We welcome your constructive criticisms of any of our actions. Should any of you feel that our actions justify your criticism, let us have it. This of course is not a one-way street, I know that each of you, because of the responsible positions you occupy will welcome our criticisms. It will be our purpose to offer constructive criticism intended to help and not hinder your efforts in our behalf.

Thank you, gentlemen.

QUESTION: I know this is an everyday, bread-and-butter question, but it is one that we in the field most frequently have to sweat with. It concerns the problem, you might say, of dealing with union rules that do not concern wages, specifically. I will cite two instances to show you what I am getting at.

During the war, at Pearl Harbor we were fighting time trying to get our vessels loaded. They had a detachment there of about 100 men from another freighter. They were delayed somewhat during the loading process. When they finally got back to the ship, however, they found they could not be fed because it was past the union hours for feeding.

Another similar instance involved the question of equipment arriving late. We had to wait a couple of hours to get some riggers installed in order to put a couple of hawsers aboard so a man could work up higher.

Those are just illustrations of what I am trying to get at--the jurisdictional allocation of work. Now how can we solve those problems to make things go faster and still keep everybody happy?

MR. WALKER: Jurisdiction is one of the toughest and most aggravating questions that plagues us in solving the problems of production or, in this case, performance.

I would say that the immediate solution to the jurisdictional problem at Pearl Harbor should have been found by the parties on the scene. I think very definitely that any union ought to recognize that in a situation such as existed at Pearl Harbor, no delays of any nature should be permitted regardless of who might have had a "beef."

On the question of the possibility of obtaining proper riggers in order for people to work higher, I would say definitely that if the individual scheduled for high work can safely do his own rigging, he should do so, especially since speed was so important.

Were these men working for private contractors, or were they working for the Government at Pearl Harbor?

STUDENT: One of each. I am not too familiar in this instance with the organization. This was a shipboard problem. But I believe these men were working for the Government at Pearl Harbor.

MR. WALKER: I see. Certainly if they were employed by the Government I find it a bit difficult to understand how there would have been any delay. I do not think in the case you have brought up that our Government ought to tolerate for one minute any delay due to jurisdictional arguments.

In a case where this kind of dispute arises and a private contractor is on the job, the officer in charge should go to the contractor and to the union representatives and put them on notice to reach an immediate understanding or steps would be taken to see that there was no further delay. Such action on the part of the officer in charge is unquestionably justified in a situation such as existed at Pearl Harbor after 7 December 1941.

As I think quickly through this, it was probably Harry Bridges' outfit with which you were dealing. We know for a positive fact there were in that outfit some people who never missed an opportunity to do things to delay operations. Of course, I do think the security forces did a pretty fair job of screening them out. They obviously missed some admitted "Commies" in that organization, for example, Bridges himself. There's no question about his "Commie" connections; I have witnessed the performance of him and his supporters on the west coast. His exposure as a "Commie" and "fellow traveler" was completed long ago; it is regrettable that it takes so long to rid our shores of his presence. It just doesn't make sense to leave an individual in our country who advocates its overthrow.

QUESTION: In the first part of your talk you mentioned agreements between management and labor on a fair wage. I realize you could possibly discuss this for a whole hour, but can you tell us whether there has been any progress made in reaching a final agreement between management and labor on what we would call a fair profit?

MR. WALKER: Well, my answer will have to be, sir, on the basis of negotiations, with our union at least, with individual employers. I think it will serve for all of them.

I never have subscribed--and our organization, in fact, does not subscribe--to the reasoning that you can set, say, a wage rate of \$1.80 or \$1.90 an hour for machinists or toolmakers, and regardless of where they work that is the rate they must receive. Nobody knows better than our organization, as a result with our dealing with so many different companies in so many lines of industry, that the ability to pay is a very important factor. It is really the factor and we cannot ignore that fact. In other words, there is an old saying about "killing the goose that lays the golden egg."

In collective bargaining there is such a thing as negotiating companies out of business. Unions can insist on an employer paying a certain wage rate which, it may be argued, other comparable workers are getting. A machinist working for an oil refinery, for example, and a machinist working for a company that manufactures gadgets which have a limited demand are entirely different kinds of business so far as the profit element is concerned.

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So we have endeavored and are endeavoring, as nearly as possible, to establish uniform wage rates in areas or industries--such uniformity helps to stabilize the labor force in an area. We have found this is not always possible since "ability to pay" becomes the deciding factor; in such cases collective bargaining finds the answer. It is a fact that companies operating in an industry which is not so profitable as other industries pose a real challenge to "bargaining" in finding a mutually satisfactory agreement on wage and salary rates. This is especially true in cases when a company's operations are subsidized in one form or another.

I think the only practical approach that can be made to a "fair wage" is through the process of minimums. Through the Walsh-Healy Act we have the minimums which have to be set on government contracting. Through the provisions of the Minimum Wage and Hour law we have the minimum wage rate and number of hours prescribed for companies in certain interstate business. I believe that the most realistic approach to this problem is the establishment of minimums. I do not believe under our system of free enterprise and free collective bargaining that the establishment of one wage rate for a particular class of work is practicable or possible. Such an approach smacks of socialism and we are opposed to nationalizing our industries.

QUESTION: I would like to get back to the Taft-Hartley law again, if I may. At the beginning of the last session of Congress several amendments were proposed to correct the very deficiencies that you listed in part. I would like for you to discuss how those amendments would have corrected some of the ills of the Taft-Hartley law if labor went along with those particular amendments.

MR. WALKER: Some of those amendments, sir, would have corrected some of the deficiencies. I understand that there was an amendment proposed to eliminate the 51 percent proviso I referred to. I understand that an amendment was submitted which would have, to some degree, solved the problem which we are confronted with in connection with the "Commies."

There were numerous other amendments which did not come up, one of which resulted from the so-called "Pipe Machinery Case." You gentlemen may be familiar with the case. That decision deprives an individual engaging in an economic strike of his status as an employee the moment a "scab" goes through the picket line and takes his job. In other words, an employer, for example, whose 50 employees are on strike can replace them with 50 "scabs" and then request a representation election in which only the "scabs" can vote. The right to strike means very little under such an unjust law. This is but one example of its union-busting potential.

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Had the Congress proceeded to take action on the various amendments, the act would have been improved. I must add quite frankly that I am not familiar with all of the amendments offered. As I recall 20 or more amendments were being discussed.

It's now common knowledge that the Taft-Hartley law became a political football. The politicians will use it as such just as long as they can; in the interim great injustices will be done to workers throughout our Nation by unscrupulous employers who desire to do so.

Even though the act is referred to as a "slave law" there is no "slavery," outright repeal is not enough, simultaneously the Congress should re-enact the Wagner Act or one similar to it which will provide proper protection to all parties to collective bargaining, instead of discrimination such as the present act permits.

Members of Congress shifted like weather vanes when considering the enactment of the act and when considering amendments in the 81st Congress. Senator Scott Lucas, for example, voted for the law's adoption and later supported the President's veto. In the 81st Congress some members voted for the Wood Bill and later voted to recommit to the committee. Such shifting could, I suppose, only occur under a democratic system of government and, for my part, that is good.

COLONEL ENNIS: Mr. Walker, on behalf of the Commandant, faculty, and student body I thank you for your very informative talk; also for the manner in which you handled the question.