

Why Does Steel Strike Go On Despite Best Wage Offer In Industry's History?

Companies believe real reason is Union demand for compulsory Union membership.

A few days ago in Washington steel companies made a new wage offer to the Union in an effort to get a prompt settlement of the steel strike.

This offer includes higher wages and other benefits adding up to the biggest increase in the history of the steel industry.

It places the pay of steelworkers far above the average of all manufacturing industries.

It includes an average wage increase of 16 cents per hour plus substantial increases in fringe benefits, making a total direct cost to the companies of approximately 25 cents an hour. That would be about \$500 yearly per employee based on the average hours worked in 1951.

Workers lose \$10 millions daily

Every full working day that this strike continues means the loss of approximately \$10,000,000 in wages to some 600,000 steelworkers and their families.

It means the daily loss of about 260,000 tons of steel production.

Why does the strike continue? Why do union leaders refuse the offer which would mean substantial increases in take home pay for the steelworkers?

The companies believe the reason for this refusal is the Union's demand for compulsory Union membership.

Granting this demand would force every future applicant for employment in the steel mills to join the Union as a condition of holding his job.

The steel companies have refused to grant this demand. They will not be a party to coercing any individual, who, for reasons of his own, does not want to join the Union.

Opposition of the companies to the Union Shop cannot be construed as opposition to the Union itself.

Since 1942 the labor agreements with the steel companies have contained provisions that gave the Union stability and security.

Free choice is basic

The companies believe it is up to each man to decide for himself whether he will or will not join any organization.

If the companies signed a contract forcing all future applicants for employment to join the Union, then we as an industry—and we as a nation—would be surrendering one more right of the individual, one more freedom.

In a world of encroaching dictatorship we are trying to preserve freedom in Europe, freedom in Korea, and freedom at home. The freedom of choice, no less than the freedom of speech and of the press, is important to the life of every American.

Steel Companies' Offer to Union

JUNE 9, 1952

1. General increase in wage rates averaging 16 cents an hour.
2. Six paid holidays, double time for holidays worked, with appropriate provisions as to eligibility.
3. Increase shift differentials to 6 cents per hour for second shift and 9 cents per hour for third shift.
4. Three weeks vacation after 15 years of service, effective January 1, 1952.
5. Decrease Southern differential of the two companies concerned by 5 cents an hour.
6. Above adjustments to be effective upon execution of complete agreement and return to work, except that general increase in wage rates to be retroactive to April 1, 1952.
7. Agreement to run to June 30, 1954, reopenable by either party as of June 30, 1953, on the subject of general adjustment of wage rates.
8. Union security provisions of present agreements which provide for freedom of choice of individual employes to join or refrain from joining the union will not be changed.
9. All other matters must be satisfactorily resolved.

STEEL COMPANIES IN THE WAGE CASE
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