

# More Federal Intervention Expected As Labor Turmoil Sweeps Over U.S.

Editor's Note: Government intervention, pressures to automate and some very human fears are increasingly important factors in labor-management relations. They help explain the length and bitterness of many of the strikes that plague the nation now or threaten to in the future. Ray Cromley takes you behind the picket lines and the public postures in this exclusive report and analysis of a critical domestic problem.



**RETRAINING** — Some union leaders have decided that retraining is not the answer to automation problems. Here some workers are being trained in Grand Rapids, Mich.

By RAY CROMLEY  
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WASHINGTON (NEA)—You can expect more government intervention in major labor disputes. Says one labor man:  
"Now that the pattern has been set there's no stopping it. In major strikes, the side that's weakest will hold out for intervention, figuring it will get more that way."  
Says a management man:  
"One side or another will hold out until the government steps in, because then it can tell its people 'See, we battled to the last ditch, but you can't fight the government.'"  
The worry on both sides and among neutral observers is that waiting for intervention may lead to longer disputes and more unreasonable demands.  
But even now, Washington officials are discussing detailed concepts for standby legislation which could be presented if and when the political time is ripe — although possibly not this year. Principal likely provisions would give the president power to:  
Set up a fact-finding board that could recommend settlement terms.  
Order a strike postponed on his own say-so instead of asking the courts.  
Seize and operate a strike-bound plant or industry.  
Some officials are also arguing for standby power to order compulsory arbitration in some cases.  
President Kennedy is already using, unofficially, the fact-finding mediation board idea without benefit of law.  
Even as they're working on new rules for more power, there's private unhappiness among many officials, even in the Labor Department, over the results of government intervention thus far. Says one department official bluntly: "Secretary Goldberg, for all his

genius in settling disputes, actually postponed a lot of the problems. We still have them with us. They still have to be solved. And by sending the Secretary of Labor out time and again to settle disputes, we've blunted the instrument, made it less effective. We keep having to add one more gimmick on top of the last."  
What worries the Administration is that it may be getting itself into a one-way street that can only lead to trouble. Here then is the dilemma the President faces:  
On the one hand, his tough-minded Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, to eke the most out of the billions he spends, is quietly ordering defense suppliers to cut down on all excess overhead, including "make-work" and other "wasteful" labor practices. He says he won't okay any

such expenses in Defense Department payments.  
Mr. Kennedy himself has put out the word that industry should automate much more rapidly to stimulate the economy, increase employment and compete with foreign nations.  
Many U.S. business managers, faced with rough domestic and foreign competition, have become convinced that they must automate faster and must have more authority to change work rules or they will stagnate and wither. For years, management could pass on new "make-work" costs to the consumer in higher prices. That day is going.  
All these decisions would normally cut the work force strongly, mean the firing of many men.  
That's the other horn of Mr. Kennedy's dilemma.  
Even as the Administration is putting heavy pressure on business to become more efficient, other U.S. officials are encouraging workers to push for contracts that would prevent business managers from firing men replaced by machines.  
So the squeeze is on business managers. As McNamara is telling them he won't pay for "make-work" practices, the Labor Department is quietly backing labor in its stand for "job security."  
This dilemma is going to get worse.  
Union men interviewed say that more and more the chief issue in major labor disputes is going to be job security.  
Many workmen are now determined to fight bitterly to prevent companies from firing established employees replaced by machines. They are going to fight to keep "featherbedding" and "make-work" practices. When they've exhausted every legal step, which may take years in each case, they'll fight for labor contracts which guarantee workmen their jobs against technological change — allow the company to reduce the work force only as sales slacken or as men retire from old age or voluntarily quit.  
Two agreements that please both labor unions and Department of Labor men are the pact between Kaiser Steel and the

United Steel Workers and the pact between the West Coast longshoremen and the shipping industry. These give management the right to automate; they guarantee that jobs won't be eliminated by those changes; there is a snaring of the results of productivity increases.  
In an interview, Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz specifically named these two agreements as typical of what he would like to see industry and labor work out.  
This change in the nature of strikes is a tremendous force that no one in government fully understands. But Labor Department men already realize that these new strikes are going to be more difficult than many strikes in past years, simply because they are based on fear.  
There is a growing belief in labor groups that large unemployment is here to stay, that neither the government nor anyone else is going to solve this problem in the foreseeable future. Many working men believe, therefore, that if they lose the job they hold, they'll never find another. They see automation erasing millions of jobs. They see the coal industry as typical. Here employment dropped from 416,000 to 160,000 in 20 years.  
Says one union man:  
"Take a 55-year-old longshoreman, who's been on the docks all his life. Fire him and what does he do? What can he do? He doesn't know anything else. He can't be trained for anything else or thinks he can't. So if he loses his job he figures he's on the dump heap. So he's interested above all in security — not wages — security. And he's scared."  
Many union men have decided that retraining programs aren't the answer. Where retraining is being tried, they say, only a small fraction of the men are found suitable. In many cases where men can be retrained, another union has jurisdiction over those jobs. It wants to preserve them for its own members. It doesn't want men from another union coming in.  
So these men are convinced they're fighting for their only chance to earn a living.



**DOCK WORKERS** — The West Coast longshoremen gave the shipping industry the right to automate. Unions now wonder if this has set a contract pattern for the future.

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