

Life Without the 'Times'

THE DAYS are rolling on and on and we have no New York *Times*. The "we" means those whose business it is to keep up with the news; it means also a much larger number of people than those who read the *Times*. The audience of that paper is as indefinable and amorphous as the paper itself. Directly or indirectly, day after day, we have all depended on that vast pool of information for the knowledge of what has happened the day before. In our times electronics is carrying the nation into something closer and closer to direct democracy, and direct democracy is making the nation into one big town—a one-paper town.

Without the *Times*, the other papers all over the country seem somewhat incongruous, for none of them can even remotely be compared to that daily installment of the diary of history. Even the best of these publications can be considered only as local or specialized supplements, useful to check on what the *Times* prints or fails to print. But how can one find relief from the New York *Times* or quarrel with it when there is no *Times*? Mr. Powers has deprived too many of us of a precious hour of frustrating drudgery.

DEPRIVED of the major source of information, we have little knowledge of what causes this deprivation. We hear charges and countercharges; we are told that three major officials of public government—the President of the United States, the governor of the State of New York, the mayor of the city—feel duty bound to show their concern and act in the interest of the public at large. But each of them has to keep an eye on a particular section of the public—organized labor. There is an aura of secretiveness around the whole business.

Is Mr. Powers fighting the publishers, or the Newspaper Guild, or is he simply out to acquire national repute as a valiant labor leader? Are the publishers fighting to preserve the ancient structure of their business, which is increasingly threatened by the coming into being of nation-wide papers—indeed by the unsurpassed prestige of one paper in the one big town? If so, the protracted strike can only accelerate the trend.

Both Mr. Powers and the publishers share the fear of compulsory arbitration. Fear of Congress, of government intervention, is to be found among all those involved in the strike. In this strange collusion of fears there is little room for clear aims on anybody's part, or a chance to have one side prevail when at long last the end finally comes. What is at stake is something far more important than publishers' profits or printers' wages. The relationship between management and labor, the margin of freedom each of the two can enjoy and share, the right of the people to know what happens in the world—these are the real issues. They are disproportionately greater than the little causes and the little men that brought about the strike.

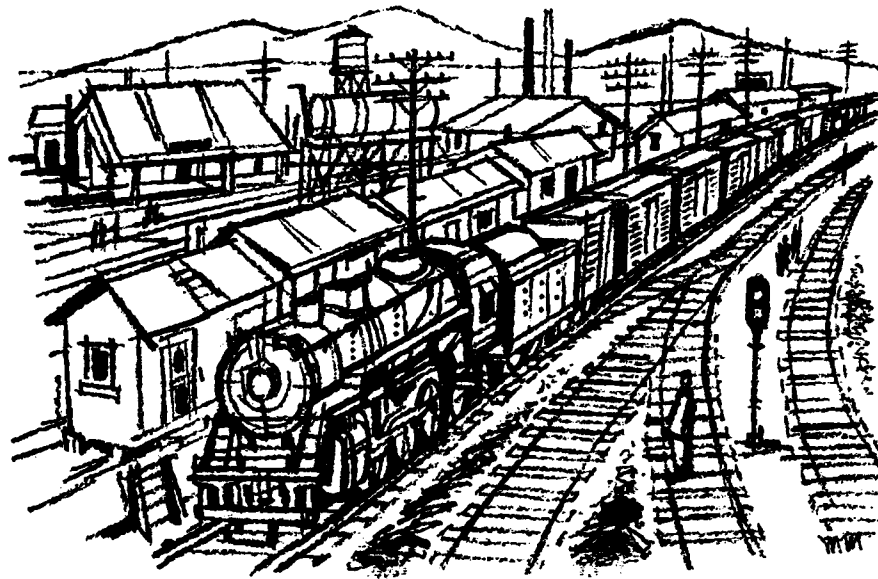
As happens quite frequently in labor-management relations, there is a singular affinity between the character of the antagonists, the publishers and the union. Both of them in their setup and outlook are about a generation behind the times. The baronial traditions still prevail among the publishers, irrespective of their varying economic strengths. On the other side, the predominance of old-fashioned craft unions and the frailty of the only industrial union, the Guild, have kept the organization of labor as quaint as that of management.

A third element can and undoubtedly will force both sides to catch up with the times. It is government, as we all know, and we envy the President's confidence that government intervention can stop short of compulsory arbitration. Maybe a way out can be found and we will have arbitration, but gently, with compulsion exerted by the government under the guise of persuasion.

Then peace will reign in the newspaper business. From the printing plants up to the city desks and the editorial offices, advancement will be decided according to inheritance or seniority. Come to think of it, are we not pretty close to this stage?

We have not begun to see what automation can do for our knowledge of events and reflection on them. The day may come when events can not only be reproduced but produced already packaged with their appropriate degree of newswiness, their quota of built-in leakages, plus comments by photogenic national figures proclaiming their undying devotion to the supreme value of individual freedom.

IN THIS strange, long conflict of the blind fighting the blind toward ends that no one seems to know or to wish, we can see, as in a distorted image, the future that may be in store for us. We only say "may," for we cannot give up our confidence in man's capacity to go behind all appearances and seek out the truth. We may be foolishly optimistic, but we still believe that man's mind can master electronics and check the trend toward automated history, automated reporting, and automated government. Perhaps, after all, Mr. Powers has rendered us a service by letting us have this glimpse of an impossible, utterly unbearable future.



Who Will Mediate the Mediators?

EDWARD J. SILBERFARB

IT HAD TO HAPPEN. Now the referees are almost as entangled as the linemen in that vast scrimmage known as collective bargaining.

The labor peacemaker has grown in prominence over the years. He has had few rules to confine him, and, like a divinity student who just got the call, he shows zeal for his cause. Moreover, government at all levels has become increasingly active as a collective-bargaining umpire. Even private individuals and civic groups try to play King Solomon from time to time. One of the recent results has been a perhaps inevitable paradox—jurisdictional disputes among labor mediators. The men who are supposed to settle squabbles have become embroiled in squabbles themselves. The effects have been amusing, expensive, confusing, or even damaging to the negotiations that the mediators are supposed to help.

In 1960, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen struck the Long Island Rail Road, the nation's busiest commuter rail line, for higher wages and a shorter work week. But the struggle between mediators was as interesting as the one between labor and management. The National Mediation Board, a Federal panel

set up to settle disputes in rail and air transportation, had been at work for more than a year to avert the strike. As the peacemaking apparatus of the Railway Labor Act spun itself out, however, the strike came.

Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York stepped in and established a three-man board of inquiry. Francis A. O'Neill, Jr., then chairman of the National Mediation Board, made it clear he thought the state was interfering with his job. He said he couldn't schedule negotiations because the state board kept both parties on call: "We can't work in two forums." Even Mayor Robert F. Wagner of New York City made a brief appearance, conferred with both parties, but soon retired from the already cluttered field.

Harold J. Pryor, the union leader, reluctantly appeared before the state panel but made known his preference for O'Neill. Thomas M. Goodfellow, the railroad president, approved the state's role. Whereupon the state, in the form of Governor Rockefeller, squeezed the money out of the company to meet the trainmen's demands.

Dr. Herbert R. Northrup, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance

and Commerce and a student of the jurisdiction problem, mentioned the Long Island situation in an article last October in the *Labor Law Journal*. He said it was a case where "settlement was slowed while the parties concentrated on finding a favorable intervenor instead of working for a settlement." Like many jurisdictional disputes among mediators, this one gave labor and management something else to quarrel about.

Since the National Mediation Board has its jurisdiction clearly chartered by law, it is rarely engulfed in this kind of controversy. Most of the jurisdictional rivalry involves state mediation agencies and another arm of the national government—the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, whose sphere of influence is as vague as the interstate commerce clause.

The law says the FMCS may enter a dispute "whenever in its judgment such dispute threatens to cause a substantial interruption of commerce," and should avoid a dispute "which would have only a minor effect on interstate commerce if state or other conciliation services are available to the parties."

The jurisdictional boundaries for