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BRICKER BECOMES HONEY-TONGUED

Midwest labor-union spokesmen made little headway proselytizing their Congressmen against the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill the other day. But their visit wasn't a total loss. At least Senator John Bricker of Ohio didn't jump down their throats, fellow-Ohioan Bob Taft made a significant admission, and Indiana's Homer Capehart contributed some laughs.

As Governor of Ohio, Bricker always took the offensive when labor delegations called on him, belligerently arguing every point like an embattled first sergeant. However, his Senatorial approach is different. He oozed politeness to the Ohio CIO spokesmen who called on him, promised to give their complaints "due consideration," urged them to call again, and did an all-around excellent job of saying absolutely nothing.

Taft was different. He stoutly denied that he had "anything against labor" and said he would do all in his power to protect labor's rights.

"Was it your intention to strengthen labor by your bill?" inquired William Lavelle, Ohio CIO secretary-treasurer.

"No, it wasn't," said Taft.

"Well, then, was it your intention to weaken labor?" asked another CIO delegate.

"Yes, it was," replied the forthright Taft. "In my opinion, labor unions are too strong for their own good."

When Indiana CIO-ers met with their Senators and Representatives, there were some embarrassing moments. Labor delegates gave pro-labor Representative Ray Madden of Indiana a tremendous ovation, but greeted Senator Capehart with grim silence.

"It's a funny thing that you boys never cheer me," blithely commented the Indiana music-box master. "I'm just a farm boy from Pike County, who worked his way up the ladder. It seems to me that you'd be proud to have a United States Senator who is a former hired hand.

"Furthermore, I've always been pleasant with you. I've never refused to meet with you, and I arranged for this nice room for you to meet us in."

All this is true. Capehart is very democratic in his contacts, will remain overtime in his office to meet with a labor spokesman. However, the "hired hand" motif of the millionaire music-box maker tickled the funnybones of his factory-working audience. There was a burst of laughter when someone commented:

"When you start voting like a hired hand, Senator, we'll tear the roof off of this place with our applause for you."

James McEwan, president of the Indiana CIO Industrial Union Council, then diplomatically stepped in and urged an ovation for Capehart. McEwan's cohorts responded with applause equaling that accorded to Madden. Capehart looked as pleased as a Cheshire cat, but his views on labor haven't changed.

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