

Talks Grounded

EFFORTS of the National Mediation Board to settle the pilots' strike against American Airlines, now in its 20th day, have been grounded by the obstinacy of the AFL Air Line Pilots Association.

So once more the costly and senseless strike, which is against the interest of the public, the pilots themselves and their fellow non-striking employes, the company, and the aviation industry in general, has side-slipped into stalemate.

We are guessing here but it appears to us the obstinacy of the union may be based on the fact that its position is so vulnerable. The most stubborn people are those who don't have a reasonable case.

The strike was called because the Western non-stop flight of American, against prevailing winds, takes about 35 minutes more than 8 hours. The union is insisting that the company must abandon its Western non-stop flight, put the planes down somewhere and take on fresh crews.

But, and this is a big but, the Civil Aeronautics Board revised the 8-hour transcontinental work limit for pilots up to 10 hours—before the strike was called.

In striking, the union disregarded this revision, and also broke its labor contract with the company. Now it has refused to arbitrate unless the Western non-stop flights are grounded during the period of arbitration. C. R. Smith, president of American, has left with the Mediation Board a written agreement to go to arbitration. So the matter stands.

We see where the union apparently is moving against Western non-stop flights of United Air Lines for the same unsupportable reasons.

We wonder what the pilots, who have the airmen's vision into the future, really feel in their hearts about a strike which seeks to block the progress of aviation.