

## ***The Pilots' Strike***

The CIO's great Phil Murray reportedly said of the Air Line Pilots Association, AFL, whose senior members draw down something like \$19,000 a year, that it resembled the Union League more than it did a union.

But the ALPA is acting like a union now, and it has pulled off a strike against American Airlines which seems to us, on the evidence at hand, almost captious. For 17 days now the big airline has been shut down, which means in the case of Little Rock that local air travelers are deprived of major east-west service and can fly to New York or Washington only by looping around through St. Louis, Chicago or Atlanta with many a change of planes and much time lost.

The pilots walked out in protest over new schedules put into effect by American when it obtained delivery on DC-7 planes which are capable of flying non-stop from coast to coast. From west to east, helped by favorable winds, these flights can be made within eight hours. But from east to west, according to the union's own figures, the average flight time has been nine hours and eight minutes.

The union is holding out for a maximum of eight hours flying, and in the past the Civil Aeronautics Board set this as a safety limit. But the CAB officially made an exception to the rule in the case of the transcontinental flights, holding that 10 hours would be well within the safety limit. On transatlantic flights, CAB allows 12 hours with an extra pilot in the crew.

The ALPA says neither additional pay nor additional jobs are at stake—that it is simply trying to protect its members against unfair working conditions. Yet it is quite clear that if the company were to accede to this demand it would have to abandon its highly desirable non-stop service since the only alternative would be to change crews en route.

We find it difficult to believe that an occasional nine-hour day works an undue hardship on an airline crew. The CAB, which is charged with responsibility in such matters, attests that no safety factor is involved in the American schedules. The pilots union, then, winds up in the position of demanding that their employer curtail service to the public for the convenience of a few organized employees—and that, we believe, is an untenable position.