

QUESTION: Sir, my question is one of a value judgment. You have dealt with the unions over the years. Would you say as a generalization that the unions have helped the industry you are associated with cause a burden over the years, or has the reverse been true?

MR. CAPLES: I cannot answer that question directly, but I do not want to duck it. Let me answer it this way. As far as the management of the company is concerned, the union has made it better. The things that caused unionization basically were bad scheduling, where you would call a bunch of men out; this was in the depression; you would send 30 home and keep two. And it is very difficult for a guy to go to work and come back and tell his wife what happened--or what didn't happen.

The indiscriminate firings and that lack of security, these things are all gone today. Today we schedule better, we manage better, and the simple reason is because the union is always looking down your throat. And they expect you to hold to a rather high standard. Because, if you do not run a company well, then the union is not going to go anyplace. So, from an operating standpoint, yes, they have done some good--a great deal of good, actually.

From an economic standpoint I do not think the answer is so clear-cut. For instance, after the war when there were great shortages they used their economic power to force more rapid rate of cost increase than really should have been forced. So, in that respect it was bad. Now they seem to have a realization of the economic problem, and in our own industry at least, in the last two bargainings--which have been peaceful--they have had a very sympathetic reaction to our problems, as we have tried to have to theirs.

So that, on balance I would say at this point it has been a good thing for the society. I also believe that if you had an election today of the unionized plants in steel, probably 95 to 98 percent of the men would want to keep the union.

QUESTION: In a newspaper report some days ago Secretary Wirtz was quoted as recommending that all overtime be charged double time rather than time-and-a-half as it is now, in order to reduce unemployment. What would be your reaction to this? Do you expect it to come up in negotiations, and do you think that the labor unions themselves will support it?