

January 23, 1946

Miss Mary Louise Roberts
411 West Delaware Avenue
Nowata, Oklahoma

Dear Miss Roberts:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 18th instant expressing your desire that I vote for a strong anti-strike bill, and stating that you believe that if the forty-hour week is abolished the strikes will end.

There are so many serious implications connected with all of the bills that have been introduced affecting labor, that I doubt if any bill which has been introduced will pass in its present form. I do not hesitate to tell you that I have no personal objections to organized labor. I believe that it has a proper place in our economic life. However, I hold no brief for the racketeers who seem to be in charge of most of our labor organizations. Strikes, as such, cannot be outlawed. I maintain that any man should have the right to quit working for me or anyone else whenever he wants to. By the same token, I think the employer should have a right to fire the employee. As long as the strikes merely mean the quitting of the people or leaving the employment in an orderly and decent manner, I think in this free country of ours they should have that right and privilege, and I shall never vote for a law which says that a man cannot quit his job, or strike, one or many. That belongs to the American ideals of freedom. Otherwise, we would be making laws which would be putting into effect a system of slavery, and free labor would become a thing of the past in this country.

However, I want it understood that I am emphatically opposed to the type of strikes and picketing that I have too frequently witnessed. You might be surprised when I tell you that I saw men picketing the White House recently. I think that was a disgrace to the Nation. I don't care what their grievance was, it was an insult to the office of President, which should be held in high esteem.

I am convinced that labor and management have both been guilty of mistakes and have committed grave errors at times. Labor, by organizing, has been able to improve the conditions of the working man in many instances and unions organized for the social, economic and other beneficial effects on laborers cannot be criticized. But I do criticize most emphatically the way some labor leaders have used the members of their organizations to promote their own selfish interests with apparent disregard for the rights and best interests of their members and the laboring people as a whole. It is nothing short of violence when an owner of a plant is not allowed to enter his own place of business or his own plant, and I am against that sort of strikes. In other words, there are strikes and strikes, and I would not be in favor simply of a law that outlaws all strikes. Orderly strikes by the right kind of people and without violence should not be prohibited.

Mr. Truman undoubtedly wanted to try to handle the labor situation without the interference of Congress, and attempted to do so until after he had failed. Then, in his recent fireside chat, he tried to pass the buck to Congress by blaming Congress and the Committees of Congress for not passing the communistic legislation which he has advocated. When he did this, he was criticizing most of all the members of his own party who have substantial majorities in both Houses of Congress and large majorities on each and every Committee in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

I observe that you are somewhat critical that I was not present the first few days Congress convened. If you will read the record of what the program was the first week, you will see that no legislation was attempted, and none was intended to be acted upon, for the President's message was not delivered until Monday of this week. That is the reason that neither Democrats nor Republicans attended the first week. There was simply nothing anyone could accomplish except in the few committees where certain hearings were being held. As a matter of fact, nothing has been done this week, so far, which has any significance.

Thanking you for your letter and the interest you have manifested and assuring you that I always appreciate having the reactions and thinking of my constituents, I am

Sincerely yours,

George B. Schwabe, M.C.

GS:IW

411 W. Delaware Ave.
Nowata, Oklahoma
January 18, 1946

Mr. George B. Schwabe,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I wish to take this opportunity to tell you that I am in favor of strong anti-strike legislation, and hope you will vote in favor of such bill.

It is my belief that the ending of the 40-hour work week, will see the end of these strikes which are sweeping our country and I will be glad to know your stand on this matter.

I was told you did not attend the opening of Congress, which is most surprising, for surely each member should attend every minute during these very serious times.

Yours truly,
Mary Louise Roberts.