

**THE RAILWAY  
LABOR ACT  
AT FIFTY**

**Collective Bargaining  
in the  
Railroad and Airline  
Industries**



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## **Collective Bargaining in the Railroad and Airline Industries**

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## Preface

On May 20, 1976, the Railway Labor Act celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Thus, today the Railway Labor Act is the oldest Federal law directly affecting labor and management relations. Except to those individuals engaged in the railroad and airline industries, the Railway Labor Act is probably the least well-known of all existing labor legislation, and consequently, perhaps the most misunderstood.

It was appropriate, therefore, that the National Mediation Board, on the occasion of the Act's fiftieth anniversary, asked Dr. Charles Rehmus, Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, the University of Michigan, to select a number of people recognized for their knowledge and expertise in the field of labor-management relations to prepare papers on the various aspects of the activities encompassed by the Railway Labor Act.

The purpose of the papers was to examine the policies and procedures mandated by the Act fifty years ago and to appraise their effectiveness and value not only over that period of time but also in terms of the present and the foreseeable future. These papers were distributed in advance to some 150 representatives of labor and management from the railroad and airline industries who, together with the authors, attended a symposium on June 8 and 9, 1976, conducted by the Board and its staff. The papers served as a basis for group discussions and commentary. More importantly, they provided the opportunity for labor and management in the railroad and airline industries and the Board and its staff to have a full exchange of views on current problems and procedures looking toward an even more effective relationship under the Act in the immediate future.

The time between the Board's decision to undertake this project and the dates for the symposium placed a severe burden on the authors, all of whom are very busy as active practitioners and teachers in their field. The Board gratefully acknowledges their willingness to undertake the assignments under these circumstances. The Board further acknowledges with thanks those from labor and management who gave of their time to be interviewed by the authors. The Board particularly wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Michael Cimini, NMB Research Director, who diligently researched fifty years of Board files and records to develop all information and materials requested by the authors.

These papers have been edited by Dr. Rehmus and assembled in this volume. It is hoped that it will be a major contribution to knowledge in the general area of labor-management relations and that it will fill an existing void in current literature leading to a better understanding and appreciation of the Railway Labor Act.

David H. Stowe, *Chairman*  
National Mediation Board

June 20, 1976