

Taxi Dispute Issues

To the Editor:

It is after deliberate consideration that I have decided to comment on your Nov. 16 editorial "Slow-Motion Justice" wherein you assessed the efforts of the National Labor Relations Board in the taxicab situation. My reluctance to comment is predicated upon the question of the propriety of discussing through the news media matters now pending before the N.L.R.B.

I am impelled, however, to state that the editorial does a disservice to the N.L.R.B., to Region 29 and to the staff of that region, a group that has done everything possible to expedite ultimate disposition of these cases. But I am of the opinion that due recognition has not been given to the rights of all parties interested in and affected by this complex situation.

Although The Times has recognized "the volume and complexity of the election" issues and "the excellent record the board's regional offices have made in eliminating red tape and speeding disposition of cases," nevertheless a brief statement of the factual and legal issues presented by the taxicab cases would be helpful.

Fleets Involved

Involved in these taxicab elections are thirty-seven separate fleets employing over 10,000 persons. The bulk of the employer petitions invoking the board's procedures was filed during March and April 1965.

These petitions were investigated and hearings opened on March 23, continuing through June 7. After briefs, the N.L.R.B. directed elections in these thirty-seven cases; the elections were scheduled for July 21, and during the intervening period the regional office checked the eligibility lists covering in excess of 10,000 employees, selected and established seventeen polling places throughout the city, prepared the notices of election, the ballots, etc.

Thereafter employers filed objections. While we need not here dwell on the details, or the validity of the objections filed by the fleet operators and another union involved, they allege, among other things: Conduct and acts of Mayor Wagner and other officials of the city, and Mayor-elect Lindsay vis-à-vis the efforts of the Taxicab Drivers Organizing Committee to organize the taxicab industry in New York City; campaign misrepresentations by the union; "an atmosphere of violence, terror and intimidation," including alleged "mass demon-

strations," damage to "hundreds of taxicabs," assaults, threats, and wide coverage in the news media; breach of the board's rule against certain type of electioneering by use of sound trucks at the garages, and activities in or about the polls.

In addition, 900 challenged ballots rendered indeterminate nineteen of the elections. The resolution of these objections and challenges required interview of hundreds of witnesses.

At the same time, petitions for elections filed by T.D.O.C., covering 42 additional fleets, were being processed. Hearings on these 42 petitions were held from Aug. 4 through Oct. 15. After consideration of the record, voluminous exhibits and briefs, the Regional Director for the 29th Region on Nov. 16 directed elections among 10,000 employees of the 42 fleets.

The mere recitation of these facts, I suggest, should give grounds for pause and re-evaluation of The Times's assertion that the actions of the N.L.R.B. are "slow-motion justice."

We believe that no party should receive "frontier justice"—but, rather, that the board, in deciding issues of this nature, should do so after thorough and considered deliberation, in the interests of all the parties, including the public interest.

ARNOLD ORDMAN
General Counsel

National Labor Relations Board
Washington, Nov. 26, 1965