

Firemen 'Ready'

CONSTITUTION

For a 2nd Strike

Turn Down Advice of Mediator ^{8/23}

By MARION GAINES

The possibility of another strike by Atlanta firemen loomed Monday after a firemen's union official declared that a mediator's proposals were "totally unacceptable."

The proposals were put forth Monday morning by Dr. Edwin Harrison, president of Georgia Tech, who was named mediator by both the firemen and the

Chief Jenkins calls for improvements in Atlanta Police Department working conditions. Page 9.

City of Atlanta as part of the settlement of a three-day walk-out by some 550 firefighters in early June.

Dr. Harrison recommended that the city either decrease the firemen's work week to 56 hours (from the present 60) or increase their salaries an equivalent amount by Jan. 1.

"Basically, this leaves us right where we started" (before the June walkout), said Capt. Jack Martin, president of the Atlanta Firefighters Union, Independent.

LEADERS CONFER

Capt. Martin conferred in the afternoon with the union's executive board and later in the night with some 267 of his union membership.

The results of both meetings left no doubt that the firemen are extremely displeased with Dr. Harrison's recommendations, which are not binding on either the city or the firemen under terms of the resolution by Atlanta aldermen authorizing the mediation.

After a station-by-station poll Monday night, Capt. Martin reported that the firemen at the union meeting voted unanimously "to wholeheartedly reject" Harrison's findings.

He said they also passed a resolution authorizing the executive board "to take any action we should determine necessary" in the dispute.

'MORE DESPERATE'

As for a walkout, he said,

Continued on Page 8, Column 1

Firemen Ready To 2nd Strike

Continued From Page 1

"These men are becoming more and more desperate."

Martin said he still has in hand mass resignations given him two and a half months ago to do with as he sees fit.

In answer to newsmen's questions, Capt. Martin said the union was "asking for the right of collective bargaining."

He said his union would not reject "compulsory arbitration with proper safeguards."

MEETING TODAY

The union will hold another meeting Tuesday morning for its second shift. Union officials said their executive board would meet after that to determine its course of action.

Capt. Martin said in receiving Harrison's report was "like waking up on Christmas morning—and no Santa Claus."

"Right now, we are more shocked and confused than anything," he said.

First reaction from firemen in the station house indicates they are ready to walk out again "in an effort to get their point across," he said.

"We thought we had made our point," he said, "but evidently we didn't."

Capt. Martin said that, in his opinion, it would "definitely take more than a two-step (pay) increase" to satisfy his union.

Dr. Harrison pointed out in his findings that the city now has under way an independent study of all city government salaries by the Public Administration Service of Chicago.

The PAS salary report is due Sept. 15.

The firemen had asked Dr. Harrison, at a July 25 hearing, for a finding that they are entitled to a \$100 a month pay raise and a 48-hour work week retroactive to June 1.

Dr. Harrison said he recognized that his findings did not come close to meeting the firemen's requests. But he said he believed the city "has attempted, within its limited resources, to treat its employees, including firemen, in a fair manner."

MAYOR ASKS ACTION

Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. said he was asking three city agencies to consider Dr. Harrison's recommendation "immediately, and

then to meet separately and jointly in order to define the city's position in this matter."

Mayor Allen said the aldermanic board already has stated it "will give first consideration in next year's budget to the establishment of a 56-hour work week for Atlanta firemen."

"The implementation of the 56-hour work week will in no way decrease the city's responsibility to consider increases in firemen's salaries in keeping with the recommendations" in the upcoming PAS report, said the mayor.

Putting into effect either the 56-hour week or an equivalent pay increase for the firemen would cost the city some \$400,000 annually.

2 OPTIONS GIVEN

Dr. Harrison gave the firemen two options: accepting either the equivalent pay increase or the four-hour per week work reduction.

In terms of money he said, that would mean a monthly pay increase of about \$28 for beginning firemen and about \$35 for top-scale firemen. The starting pay for the city's firemen is now \$403 a month.

Dr. Harrison said the decision on the options should be "left entirely to the firemen."

He added: "It should be understood that whichever option is elected, it is not to be considered a substitute for, nor an offset against, any future general increases granted to city employees at large."