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Jim Shrike*

The Atlanta Firefighters Union Independent will and are ready at anytime to start negotiations with the Mayor of the City of Atlanta. We have always been ready. The Atlanta Firefighters have agreed to accept Dr. Erwin D. Harrison's report. This we tried to do before Friday, September 2.

Dr. Harrison, President, Georgia Institute of Technology, in his mediator's report, gave the Union the option of a shorter work-hour week or an increase in pay. The report was made public. I will read in part from Dr. Harrison's report:

Option I: Reduce average work week from present 60 hours to one of 56 hours, which permits a three-platoon operation. This is a fairly common arrangement around the country. This reduction in hours would be made without any change in total compensation so that hourly rate would be effectively increased from the present figure by an amount slightly above 7%. It should be emphasized that under this Option the total pay would not be increased (aside again from any future pay increase granted to all City employees).

Option II: Maintain the present average work week of 60 hours and to grant the presently employed firemen the fruits of the increase in the total wage bill which would have resulted from the necessary employment of additional firemen if Option I were selected. This increase would amount to 7.14% to be granted on an "across the board" basis. The Atlanta Firefighters chose Option II, that the increase in pay start September 1 or be retroactive from January 2, 1967 to September 1.

We were and are ready to accept the recommendations of Paul J. Hallinan, Archbishop of the City of Atlanta, that the question of legality be left in the hands of a Superior Court Judge to act as arbitrator, and his findings be binding on both parties.

The Mayor has refused to sit down with our Union at anytime since August 31, and has refused any offer to end this dispute by anyone. There are many important people who have tried in the interest of public safety. We ask why has he refused.