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The Senate early this week moved into the final stages of its consideration of the first major labor bill in this session of Congress. The measure, as originally offered under bipartisan sponsorship has as its announced purpose to provide for registration, reporting, and disclosure of employee welfare and pension benefit plans. However, once the bill was brought up for full debate, a rather extensive group of amendments were offered with the desire, on the part of their sponsors, to have them made a part of the basic legislation. In a series of votes which took the Senate into night sessions and an unusual Saturday meeting, a majority of the membership refused to accept these amendments at the present time, but instead indicated a preference for having them made the subject of public hearings and afterwards introduced as a separate measure during this session. This action was taken so as to make certain that these proposals would have the benefit of a fair and impartial hearing as other major legislative matters receive. Meanwhile, the additional activities of the Congress during this past week covered a great many other matters in addition to labor legislation. In the Armed Forces Committee of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of Defense began his presentation of his testimony in support of President Eisenhower’s plan to reorganize the nation’s defense system. This is, in many respects, a most controversial proposal since, among other things, it would appear to give the Secretary of Defense broad latitude to transfer funds among various branches of the service. A privilege heretofore reserved for Congress, which has the Constitutional responsibility of making appropriations. This defense reorganization plan could very well become the major legislative issue between Congress and the White House before the year is over. Naturally, the Chief Executive, with his broad background of military experience, feels that this is one subject on which he is a recognized authority. Most members of Congress will probably agree to that point, but it is doubtful that they will be willing to lay aside some policy decisions affecting the Defense Department with which, as the representatives of the people, they have long been associated. Of course, it goes without saying that whatever can be done to streamline the
functions of the military forces, with a view to eliminating duplication of effort, overlapping activities, or inefficient procedures will almost certainly receive congressional backing. Personally, I very much hope that the members of our Senate and House Armed Services Committees will, in the course of their hearings on the President’s reorganizational plan, be able to receive a common understanding without recourse to a major controversy. Certainly, our responsibility for adequate national defense, both here at home and for our allies, is a matter of utmost concern and constant urgency. We cannot afford to compromise this obligation under any circumstances whatsoever. Before concluding, in response to continued inquiries from many of our postal employees throughout Delaware, may I point out that a conference committee of the Senate and House should conclude its deliberations early this week on legislation to increase the compensation of post office workers and to adjust postal rates, although there have been some indications that the President might veto the Postal Pay Bill in its presently proposed form. It is hoped that the substantial increase in the cost of living which has occurred since the last adjustment in postal salaries was approved will, among other factors, convince the President to approve this bill once the conference report has been adopted by the two houses of Congress.

[05:05]

Mr. Kelly: Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation’s capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time, speaking from the Senate Office Building in Washington.

[End 05:28]