

# EDITORIALS

## CONTRABAND SHOULD BE STOPPED

Airplane service was interrupted yesterday by a sudden strike of the workers of Pan-American Airways, the Compañía Cubana de Aviación, and the Compañía Mexicana de Aviación. The flights of these three airlines were suspended as ground crews walked out and the military took over the different airports operated by these companies throughout the island.

This strike has particular significance. It is not a case of workers striking against the companies to enforce the granting of demands for higher wages nor better working conditions. There is no grievance against the companies. On the contrary, the demands of the workers tend to eliminate competition considered unfair.

The workers are protesting against the use of Columbia military airport as a terminal by other lines. They allege that there is considerable contraband traffic at the military airport, where they apparently believe customs supervision is not as strict as it should be. This naturally deflects passenger and cargo traffic to airlines using Columbia. At the same time, the government in an effort to reduce contraband has tightened customs inspections at the private airports.

That workers should feel impelled to strike in order to prevent entry of contraband goods into a country is original indeed. But it seems to be on the way to become a customary thing. Only recently one of the syndicates protested that there was considerable contraband importation of Spanish alcoholic drinks through some of the island's seaports.

These protests come at a time when it is known that the government has taken and is taking steps to prevent what is popularly conceived to be an enormous contraband traffic.

We feel sure that the government will act to correct any deficiency in the application of customs measures to prevent contraband which is harmful both to licit commerce and to the public treasury.