

Senator PROXMIRE. I don't mean this at all critically, but I am just wondering.

Mr. ADAMS. Those who hold any Government grant of privilege are obviously protecting a vested interest position.

Senator PROXMIRE. So many of these railroads are doing so badly, many of them are losing lots of money. We have one up in my State that claims to be losing \$1,500 a day and they are pleading with the ICC to have a chance to abandon their operation entirely.

Mr. ADAMS. I think they should be allowed to. Where a railroad operates and how it operates ought to be left to its own managerial discretion.

Senator PROXMIRE. Here is where you run into a really tough political problem because the people who use that service don't want to see it abandoned. They depend on it, they need it. They say it is the only way they can commute, many of them can't afford automobile transportation, or it is very inconvenient, and also, of course, you have literally thousands and thousands of jobs.

Now, in spite of the ICC we have lost all kinds of railroad service and railroad operation, and we are going to continue to. That makes it difficult.

Mr. ADAMS. If it is—well, if it is the judgment, the legislative judgment of the State legislature or of the Congress, that a particular type of service ought to be maintained even though it is unprofitable, then the only thing to do is to grant that kind of service an outright subsidy.

In that case you would know precisely what you are buying and how much it is costing you.

But to prevent competition in order to achieve this kind of protection, this is the most inefficient way of subsidizing an industry.

It would be analogous to saying to the carriagemakers in the 19th century, "We are not going to permit the competition of automobiles in order to protect the jobs and the investment you have made in your industry."

Senator PROXMIRE. Mr. Lanzillotti, do you want to finish off the ICC? [Laughter.]

Mr. LANZILLOTTI. I think Adams has taken care of that problem.

Senator PROXMIRE. Do you support it?

Mr. LANZILLOTTI. I support him on this; yes, sir.

Senator PROXMIRE. Well, we will have the ICC before us on Thursday at this rate. [Laughter.]

Mr. LANZILLOTTI. We face these risks rather repeatedly. You mentioned a point earlier about antitrust laws and business uncertainty. There was a very small point I wished to make on that particular problem, or dilemma.

We could reduce the uncertainty which faces the business community today in that area, and I think we should. I think it is unfortunate that we have so much delay in the decisions in this particular area of merger cases. I don't think it is good for the antitrust agencies program nor do I think it is good for the business community.

In other words, what I am saying is we need to cover more ground and cover it more rapidly in the area of mergers. The law has been on the books here now for over 10 years and while I am gratified with recent decisions, we have covered hardly no ground at all.