

RAILROAD LABOR DISPUTE

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1967

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Harley O. Staggers (chairman) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

The committee has met this morning to take up House Joint Resolution 559, to provide for the settlement of the labor dispute between certain carriers by railroad and certain of their employees.

I would like to make a statement before we start, as an explanation of some of the alternatives that might be considered.

A more or less familiar ditty runs like this, I believe:

As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today.
Oh, how I wish he'd go away.

Gentlemen, he has not gone away. He's back again, and in my opinion he will be hanging around until this threatened railroad strike is settled.

The matter has been forced upon the Congress, and initially upon this committee, much as we dislike it. There is no point in closing our eyes to the fact. If we have the moral and political courage which I think Congress has, we will find some practical solution for this problem.

A week ago the House, at the request of this committee, and with some reluctance, agreed to a second extension of the "cooling off" period. The period ends June 19. At the time, we promised, in all sincerity, that we would consider some proposal which would dispose of the dispute in one way or another. I doubt that the House would welcome a request for a further extension of time during which the matter would hang in the balance, and the disputing parties, as well as the general public, might be even less tolerant.

It is inconceivable that the problem should hang like a pall over us all summer, influencing our thinking about other matters which need careful attention.

I feel that there is good reason to believe that this second period of delay has served to divert attention away from the differences between the labor unions and management, and focus it on proposals as to what Congress should or should not do.

As the argument over this gets hotter and hotter, it will be increasingly difficult to do anything. If we fail to make some progress