

THE PROPOSAL

I have carefully weighed the type of action Congress might usefully consider to meet the needs of the immediate situation.

I have consulted with the wisest advisors available to a President.

The legislation I am proposing takes full account of two central considerations. The first is the significance of uninterrupted rail service to the national welfare and safety, and particularly to defense production. The second is that even in these extreme circumstances, collective bargaining must be given every opportunity to work—with the bargainers fully aware of the national significance of their responsibility.

With these considerations in mind, I recommend that Congress approve a joint resolution to extend the 60-day "no strike" period in this case for an additional 20 days.

The resolution would have the effect of extending the "no strike" period under the Railway Labor Act for this case to a full 80 days—the same period allowed under the Taft-Hartley Act. The normal period of restraint under the Railway Labor Act has already expired.

The proposed joint resolution follows the finding made by the Emergency Board of three distinguished Americans to whom this case was referred under the Railway Labor Act. The Board was of the conviction that:

"There should be established a longer period of statutory restraint subsequent to the submission of an Emergency Board's report in order to give the parties additional time to negotiate a settlement. The Board notes that under the Taft-Hartley Act the parties have a period of 80 days after the Board Report is submitted to the President."

The proposed resolution gives the process of collective bargaining a last clear chance in this case while giving the Nation the uninterrupted railroad service it must have. I have always believed that solutions arrived at through hard and honest negotiations are preferable to those imposed by decree.

I will appoint a panel of special mediators to assist the parties in reaching a settlement during this 20-day period. I have also asked Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Transportation Alan Boyd, and representatives of the other interested government agencies to work with the parties.

THE IMPACT OF A STRIKE

The differences which remain in this dispute are important. But they are slight when compared with the price to the country and to these parties from a suspension of rail service.

The purpose of this Message and of this proposal is to impress upon the parties and to make clear to the Nation what is at stake here.

The cost of a nation-wide railroad strike would be incalculable. I urge you to consider these facts:

- On the first morning of the strike three-quarters of a million rail commuters in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia alone would be unable to take their trains to work.
- Shipments of perishable foodstuffs to many major cities would be halted at once.
- Actual food shortages could soon occur in several cities.
- Some health hazards would develop. For example, supplies of chlorine used to purify community water supplies would grow short.
- The coal mining industry, with 140,000 workers, would cease operations almost at once.
- Many other industries which rely heavily on the railroads—such as metal mining, steel, chemicals—would be badly crippled and soon begin to close down.
- For a week or more most factories could operate from their inventories. Soon, shortages and bottlenecks would begin to curtail production drasti-