is a vital third party in such issues which deserves at least equal if not paramount consideration.

Too often in the past there has been the assumption that within the Government, the Department of Commerce has been a spokesman for management and the Department of Labor a spokesman for the unions.

I know that the present Acting Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Labor as well as the past Secretaries with whom I have been associated reject that characterization. They would acknowledge no representation other than that of the public interest. That also is my position.

The public interest in the railroad dispute goes beyond a matter of inconvenience—it vitally involves this Nation's Vietnam and defense effort and capability; it involves provision of essential commodities to our great cities; it involves maintaining our 73-month record of economic expansion and our current low-unemployment rate. And it involves more.

Mr. Chairman, the information that we provide to you today is by no means a total picture of what will happen if there is a nationwide railroad strike.

Our Department is now approximately 5 weeks old. We have not yet had the opportunity to develop the research and analysis activities that will enable us to assess, with far greater precision, what the impact of ary transportation shutdown will be. We have several contracts with research experts which will, within a short time, enable us to make such evaluations.

Nevertheless, the evidence that we offer you today has convinced us that a national railroad strike would affect virtually every segment of the American economy and cause immeasurable hardship for most Americans.

The railroads operate 211,500 miles of line serving over 50,000 communities. During 1966, the rail system moved over 738 billion ton-miles of freight, approximately 43 percent of the total intercity movement. Nearly 13 billion passenger-miles in intercity transportation were provided by the rail system, which is 18 percent of the total intercity movement carried by common carriers.

Rail commutation service produced over 4 billion passenger-miles, concentrated mainly in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Transportation services performed by the railroads produced $10.7 billion in revenues or 1.4 percent of total gross national product. The railroads employ over 630,000 workers, most of which would be immediately without work should a stoppage occur.

A characteristic of the development of transportation in this country has been a growing specialization of transportation services. The economics of rail transportation make it the most inexpensive means of moving many high density, bulk commodities.

In areas without access to effective water transportation, rail is the only economically feasible alternative available for the movement of bulk traffic. Some groups of commodities move almost exclusively by rail.

Among manufactured products, railroads carry over 90 percent of the ton-miles of shipments of passenger car bodies and body parts, nonferrous metal primary smelter products, millwork and prefab-

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