

possess a right that they have traditionally always had; namely, the right to work or the right not to work for cause.

I am asking you what, if anything, have the mediators done in response to this offer by the unions?

Secretary WIRTZ. The mediators have done nothing in response to the offer.

Mr. MACDONALD. Has anybody on the Government side done anything?

Secretary WIRTZ. It is not only my understanding, but I do testify, that there has been consideration of the matter as reflected in the testimony of the Secretary of Transportation. After consultation, it is my understanding, and it is the position of the Secretary of Transportation, that the arrangement proposed would not satisfy the public interest.

Mr. MACDONALD. As far as I can tell—and that message was sent to the Secretary of Defense on the 28th of April, and then it was followed up by a response by a Mr. Caputo, whom I don't know, but whom you may know—

Secretary WIRTZ. No, I don't.

Mr. MACDONALD (continuing). And it was addressed to Secretary McNamara—and it was followed up on the 10th of May by another letter from the brotherhoods and the workers.

They suggested that a panel be set up immediately, of interested people on both sides, responsible railroad people, responsible union people, and they even suggested perhaps since the onus or at least the administration has come to us—perhaps somebody from the Senate side and the House side also be represented as representing the legislative branch.

It seems to us if, indeed, there is an attempt to mediate this strike, that this is a reasonable offer and should be followed up. I don't truly understand why it hasn't been followed up.

Secretary WIRTZ. I thought when you referred to mediators you were referring to those of us who have been working with the terms and conditions of employment that are involved in the dispute here.

Mr. MACDONALD. Actually, I am talking about everybody in the Government who is interested in getting this national emergency, which it has been called, settled. It seems to me if one side says, "We ought to set up a panel and try to resolve this thing so there won't be a national emergency," that it is beholden on those people who have the authority to negotiate in the name of the Government to follow it up.

Just to have it sit there blank in the record as an offer made by the brotherhoods, the workers, and to have no response except an acknowledgment that, "Yes, this offer had been made," seems to me—and I am not being critical of you, obviously, because you have my deep sympathy; you have a very tough job and I know you do, and I know you are a very able person—it seems to me that somebody, and I don't know who—it wasn't the Secretary of Defense, certainly, because he didn't even answer this thing; it wasn't the Secretary of Transportation; and now you say it wasn't the people who are dealing as you are, as a mediator—I am suggesting that somebody should follow this up.