

Secretary WIRTZ. Could I say to Mr. Macdonald that I do have now the detailed information. The letter to which I referred is a letter of May 9 from the Acting Secretary of Defense, Mr. Vance, to Mr. Staggers, setting out the detail to which I referred.

I have also, since our second conversation, been in touch indirectly with the Department of Defense which indicates its complete willingness to meet on any further discussion of this which seems advisable.

(The letter referred to follows:)

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,

Washington, D.C., May 9, 1967.

HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS,
*Chairman, Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We appreciate very much the cooperative attitude of the Unions as expressed in their telegram of April 28, 1967, to Secretary McNamara, in which they stated they stood ready to attempt to arrange for continued rail transport of shipments necessary to our military effort and the public health. Unfortunately, however, the proposal contained in the telegram does not meet the national defense requirements for the following reasons:

1. The movement of essential defense materiel in less than carload lots would require special trains. This in turn would result in a slowing down of the delivery of required equipment and ammunition to the ports.

2. The sorting and selecting of railroad cars containing essential defense freight in classification yards will also delay the delivery of essential defense materiel.

3. The time required to assemble complete trainload lots will, of course, also substantially delay the shipment of essential defense materiel.

It is our belief that the nation cannot tolerate a rail strike at this time. It is also our belief that the fairest and most equitable solution is the Joint Resolution recommended by the President last week.

Either Secretary McNamara or I, accompanied by appropriate military advisors, will be pleased to appear before your Committee to amplify on the foregoing matters, or to answer any other questions which your Committee may have.

Sincerely yours,

CYRUS VANCE,

Acting Secretary of Defense.

Mr. MACDONALD. Then there will be a meeting?

Secretary WIRTZ. There is a compete willingness there.

Mr. MACDONALD. How about the railroads?

Secretary WIRTZ. I think it is safer to say that there will be a meeting. My jurisdiction isn't quite that broad.

Mr. MACDONALD. I am very happy to hear it. Thank you very much.

Mr. FRIEDEL. Mr. Watson.

Mr. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Pursuing the inquiry of a moment ago, I am sure if we were to hold 12-hour day hearings here for the next 90 days this committee would never fully understand the ramifications of wage compression.

Let us get down to the basic issue which concerns all of us. That is the matter of whether or not this is compulsory arbitration.

I am not going to engage, Mr. Secretary, in any argument with you over words. I believe it should not be restricted to compulsory arbitration.

As the chairman noted a moment ago, it concerns me deeply that there is no apparent effort at this time to negotiate on the part of the parties.

May I ask you further as to whether or not the President has called on the parties to meet and try to settle their differences in recent days?