

Secretary WIRTZ. The President has not done so in person. There has been repeated contact by myself, and by the Under Secretary of Labor, with the parties.

Mr. WATSON. I think it is fair to say that neither of the parties favor compulsory arbitration, and one of the parties has been quite vocal in their opposition to it. I guess down home we are sort of country folks and believe in the old adage that your actions speak louder than your words. Right now I am finding it particularly difficult to wrestle with this problem when apparently those who say "don't deny us voluntary arbitration" apparently are doing nothing in trying to prove that it will work.

Do you not agree with me that the only sure way that we can avoid the passage of this legislation is for the parties to agree?

Secretary WIRTZ. I do. I call attention to the last paragraph or two of the President's message in which he transmitted this proposal, and in which he said that there is only one right way to settle it and that is by agreement of the parties, and what is called for here is an act of responsibility by the parties which would make an act of necessity by the Congress unnecessary.

Mr. WATSON. So the real solution to this problem as to whether or not it is compulsory arbitration or whether or not we have this bill enacted into law rests in the hands of the disputing parties.

Is that correct?

Secretary WIRTZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. WATSON. Did I understand you to say that the last meeting was probably April 27?

Secretary WIRTZ. The last across-the-table meeting was on April 25. There have been subsequent meetings between the mediators and the parties or representatives of the parties.

Mr. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, if I may make one very candid observation, I am not impugning the motives of anyone, but I make this observation with a great degree of personal concern: I don't believe that any parties are going to be able to get together when I observe in this hearing room that they wouldn't even sit together. It is very disturbing that apparently the differences have become so pronounced. Unless there is a third party objection here, I believe it is rather hopeless at this point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FRIEDEL. Mr. Dingell.

Mr. DINGELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I have a number of points I would like to treat with you.

Can you make the flat statement that the wage scale in the railroad industry for the several crafts is commensurate with the wage scale in other similar industries, for example the Greyhound bus industry, the airlines, and perhaps some of the other portions of the transportation industry?

Secretary WIRTZ. No.

Mr. DINGELL. Would it be fair to say that, as a matter of fact, it is rather below the other industries?

Secretary WIRTZ. Yes, I think that is right. The answer would have to be broken down, but it is surely below, in some areas, on the basis of some comparison.