

was speaking for the executive branch when he declared on Tuesday morning:

Your Government rejects this (partial operation) as an administrative impossibility, and your Government will continue to reject it.

That was the situation when Mr. Fox and I went to the Pentagon last Tuesday afternoon to discuss railway labor's essential-shipments proposal with various high officials, including Secretary Boyd and Deputy Secretary Vance. We had hoped railroad management representatives might also be present, but they were not. We had hoped for a real brass-tacks discussion, but it did not go that way.

Mr. Vance early in the meeting indicated the administration's decision had already been made against our proposal. Various questions were put to us about how our proposal could work in a practical way.

We answered them all, but the officials present didn't seem to be interested in our answers or in exploring the matter further. I suggested to them they were simply telling us it can't be done.

That isn't the slogan of the Marines, I told them. After about three-quarters of an hour the meeting broke up, and Mr. Boyd then stated to the press, according to newspaper accounts, that:

The suggested operation would create a situation which could only be described as chaos. It would not result in the movement of essential defense or public health commodities on any schedule.

Gentlemen, if you have any questions about the practicalities of our essential-shipments proposal I shall try to answer them after I finish this statement. But I should like to take just a moment now to answer this claim about chaos and no schedules.

Most long-distance railroad freight moves on scheduled trains, just as passenger trains operate on a schedule. Of course, the railroads also run extra freights and their local freights, which pick up and set out cars along the route, do not have regular schedules. But the scheduled trains do represent the backbone of speedy long-distance railroad freight haulage, and the maintenance of such schedules, because of interconnections, is very important to good service.

But there is no reason whatsoever why all present freight train schedules should not be maintained under our partial-strike essential-shipments proposal except for one thing: to keep the schedules, most freight trains would go out with fewer loaded cars than now; and since the trains would require the same crews, the railroads would make less money than on their present trains; therefore, the railroads apparently have in mind canceling their schedules and holding the essential shipments until they could assemble long and profitable trains like they have now.

This is the only reason for the threat of chaos from no schedules—the insistence of the railroads on making a profit during a strike.

On this point I quote from testimony last Monday to the Senate Labor Subcommittee by President W. Thomas Rice of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad:

What are the lines . . . to do when there are only just a few cars to move? Of course they would not move them unless it had been decreed by the government that they had to. Look at the expense of operating a 10-car train compared to 150-car train. . . . Who will pay us? We will be bankrupted before long, in my opinion.