

Mr. RAMSEY. We have the right to do that.

Mr. HARVEY. You may have the right on paper, but let me say this, that in the tenure of eight Presidents of the United States since 1922, in the tenure of 23 different Congresses, all of them have seen fit to prevent a railroad strike.

I say to you right now that I don't think any Congressman here today is going to permit a railroad strike, either. It doesn't seem to me that that is an alternative that we live with. You mention that in your statement, but I say to you that I, for one, am not going to second-guess either the President or the Secretary of Defense, whether they be of my party or somebody else's party. When they take this attitude, I think we have to agree with them.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Adams.

Mr. ADAMS. Mr. Ramsey, who requested that the groups bargain in national units? Was this done by the carriers or was this done by the unions individually or by some agreement?

Mr. RAMSEY. I think it originated back in 1930, in the 1930's, perhaps as early as 1932. It was decided and understood, and agreed, that the best way to handle the negotiations in the railroad industry was on a national basis.

Mr. ADAMS. That leads me to the question that you started to allude to but didn't finish with one of the other members. That is, are the union negotiators—and I believe you have all the gentlemen here—authorized now to settle this matter without—and I will ask it in two parts—first, referendum to the membership, or, second, referral to the national organizations' regional chiefs?

Mr. RAMSEY. We are fully authorized any time we reach an agreement that we believe to be reasonable, to settle and sign, and it becomes effective.

Mr. ADAMS. You mention in your chronology that April 25 was the last carrier meeting. I would ask you this, and you can confer with the other members of your group if necessary—though I assume you probably have before—have you indicated to the mediators in this matter that you are willing to move from the established position of your last stated public offer, to some other position in order to obtain settlement? I won't ask you what specific position you would have to move to, but have you so indicated this?

Mr. RAMSEY. Indirectly; yes, sir.

Mr. ADAMS. This becomes important. I want to limit this just to the national strike situation and the national emergency which we have here. Is that clear? The reason I ask you publicly today is that I think it is important to the type of legislation that we frame. Has it been clear that you have indicated a willingness to mediate or to settle this, that you are not frozen on your last public offer?

Mr. RAMSEY. We are never frozen as long as negotiations can take place and there is good-faith bargaining, exchanges of proposals and counterproposals. We are never frozen.

Mr. ADAMS. You have so indicated this to the mediators. You mentioned that you have had most recently with you the Fahy Panel, and Secretary Wirtz, Secretary Boyd, and Mr. O'Neill. They were all together on the 23d of April.

Mr. RAMSEY. I think Under Secretary of Labor Reynolds and Secretary Wirtz are familiar with the fact that we are ready, willing, and able to negotiate at any time. We are not frozen.