

the meeting and had offered testimony. To me this doesn't quite go to the point. I can't see the great emergency of that because the statement has been made over and over again that the plan would not work.

Have you or the Department ever asked the railroad people if such a plan would be workable?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I have read the testimony, as I stated earlier, of one of the railroad presidents. I don't recall whether I spoke personally to anyone else associated with the management of the railroads. I do not believe I have.

I recall one telephone conversation with a member of the staff of the Association of American Railroads. But I do not believe, based on my recollection of that, that we discussed the plan of partial operation.

Mr. PICKLE. Mr. Secretary, as one member, I don't know why you don't officially ask the railroads for their position on such a plan as was offered.

This committee and this country is facing a time crisis and in approximately 12 days we are going to have a strike or else we are going to have some kind of legislation to head it off. Time is of the essence.

I don't know why you don't get the official statement of such a group, and if there is any question that needs to be pursued that you would pursue it, while these hearings are going on. I think we ought to do that as a matter of completing the record.

Mr. IGNATIUS. Yes, sir; I think we could do that. I think also, and I will need to check with the Department of Transportation, I suspect they may have done that. I am not certain of that, but they have certainly been involved. I will check with them.

That is something we can do. But I don't think we will learn anything new from it, sir.

Mr. PICKLE. The real question is, on the testimony before us: Is such a plan in your opinion workable, the separation of the transportation of defense-essential goods? You, Mr. Secretary, that is, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Transportation, and, I assume, all related officials in these departments have said it was unthinkable, that you could not do it.

Mr. IGNATIUS. That is correct, that is not a feasible solution to the problem.

Mr. PICKLE. We in this committee must either say that you are right or you are wrong. It behooves us, and none of us on this committee are experts, to say that you do not know what you are talking about. I am compelled to think that your testimony is logical. As distasteful as the legislation may be, we face the decision of taking some kind of action that is best for the country.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Watkins?

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to ask one question: You made the statement, Mr. Secretary, that you are opposed to compulsory arbitration. Is that the thinking of your department or of yourself?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I must be very explicit on this point. The chairman characterized my appearance at the outset as one not having to do with labor-management issues. I do not appear before this committee as an expert on labor-management relations.

Mr. WATKINS. Are you in favor of it, or is it your view or the Department's, or Mr. McNamara's view?