

Mr. BROWN. In other words, you would feel there is no purpose to be served by railroad management and labor sitting down at this point?

Mr. RICE. At the present posture, as I understand it, there would be no useful purpose in such a meeting.

Mr. BROWN. Do you have any preference of order between compulsory arbitration, seizure, or a strike, Mr. Rice?

Mr. RICE. My personal feeling, and again I want to emphasize, Mr. Brown, that I am not speaking for the industry but I am speaking as an individual, where collective bargaining has run its course and there has been a failure to reach an agreement——

Mr. BROWN. Do you feel collective bargaining——

Mr. RICE. I say where it has, in answering your question.

Mr. BROWN. In this case it has?

Mr. RICE. I think it has; yes, sir. Then I believe an impartial panel appointed by the President of the United States to hear the dispute and to move on it is the only way to settle interests that are as great as these to the public.

I, for one, speaking for one railroad, would be perfectly willing to take my day in court before that panel and abide by their decision.

Mr. BROWN. What would be your second choice, Mr. Rice?

Mr. RICE. I am speaking of the finality bill as my No. 1. I have no second.

Mr. BROWN. May I ask you if one of the critical phases of this problem is the nationwide nature of this kind of strike? Do you have any suggestions for permanent legislation which might avoid the nationwide character of strikes in the rail industry? Do you think this would help resolve the problem which we face?

Mr. RICE. Mr. Brown, I certainly do not. I have no thoughts on that. Mr. Wolfe is sitting on my left and if you want to be brought up to date on these negotiations I am sure he will be glad to do it.

Mr. BROWN. I have had my opportunity to question Mr. Wolfe. This is the first opportunity I have had to question the president of an individual railroad.

It seems to me that part of the problem that we face is because there has been a conclusion that we must all hang together lest we hang separately in some way. If this were a strike on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad only, I am not sure that I would be called upon as a Member of Congress to serve as a labor negotiator in this instance. But it is not. It is a strike of all the railroads in the country.

We have had testimony from the Defense Department and others to indicate that for that reason it is a matter of national consequence.

My question is: Do you think there is any way we can avoid the nationwide character of rail strikes in the future?

Mr. RICE. I know of none.

Mr. BROWN. Which leaves us, then, as I gather from your testimony, with the choice between compulsory arbitration, seizure, or the strike?

Mr. RICE. I would much prefer the finality bill. Seizure, in my opinion, would accomplish little to dispose of the issue. A strike would be a national catastrophe.

Mr. BROWN. But avoiding any of these is not worth negotiating?

Mr. RICE. That was never said by me.

Mr. BROWN. You said that there is no point in now negotiating.