

Mr. RICE. I believe I said that where nothing could be accomplished—

Mr. BROWN. You are assured of that?

Mr. RICE (continuing). There was no point in negotiating.

Mr. BROWN. Are you assured that nothing could be accomplished by the two parties in this dispute?

Mr. RICE. I did not so say. I said where nothing could be. I was making a hypothetical statement. Mr. Wolfe can speak to whether something can be accomplished or not.

Mr. BROWN. You don't consider it desirable to urge Mr. Wolfe to meet again with the railroad unions?

Mr. RICE. Will you repeat the question?

Mr. BROWN. You don't consider it desirable to urge Mr. Wolfe to meet again with the unions?

Mr. RICE. I consider it highly desirable wherever there is the slightest opportunity of any type of breakthrough, and Mr. Wolfe knows that. He knows it from every railroad president that he represents. His committee is made up of representatives of the various railroads of this country who treat with him and confer with him daily as to the posture of this problem.

Mr. BROWN. Is there anything that can be accomplished by such a meeting now?

Mr. RICE. Again, I refer that question to Mr. Wolfe.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SPRINGER. Mr. Chairman, might I ask a question in view of this colloquy?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. SPRINGER. Everybody here has been sympathizing with both parties about sitting down. If there is anybody more in favor of that than I, I don't think there is anyone on this committee.

I may be misquoting, but it was my understanding from Mr. Wolfe, that the present posture and the conditions on which they were bargaining were so far apart that it was not felt that there was anything that could be accomplished by either side. I think I state this correctly. I don't want the record to go on with people on the committee on both sides to keep talking about this question of talking. These people are in the neighborhood of 14 percent apart on a total of 2 years, as I understand it.

One is talking about 5 or 6½ percent, according to which side you hear, and the other is talking, as I understand it, in the neighborhood of a 2-year period at 19 or 20 percent.

I believe this is what Mr. Ramsey and Mr. Wolfe are fairly well agreed upon, that this is where they stand. Now the question is, Do you accomplish anything with these people sitting down with this posture at this time?

If they can sit down under these circumstances and talk, I sure want them to do it. But I don't think this record ought to deal with a lot of moralizing that this is somewhere near the position of talking at the present time.

Mr. Brown, am I stating this about the way you heard the testimony? This wasn't said for your benefit. There has been a lot said here this morning. I don't want to get the issues confused that these people are anywhere near any probability of settling.