

I have listened very carefully to testimony today. As I understand it, you have the authority and you are willing and ready to sit down to resume negotiations forthwith. Is that a correct statement?

Mr. WOLFE. Yes. And we will negotiate as long as we feel there is any possibility of making an agreement. And if it becomes apparent that progress is not being made, we are willing to voluntarily enter into an agreement to arbitrate.

I honestly believe that such an agreement, the procedures all being spelled out in the Railway Labor Act, could be entered into in not to exceed 30 minutes.

Mr. BROTZMAN. You kind of slipped over one question. I think you answered it in part, but I want to be sure I understand it correctly.

Your authority also contains the right for you to enter into the voluntary arbitration agreement we have been talking about here this morning?

Mr. WOLFE. Yes, sir; we do have that authority.

Mr. BROTZMAN. Now the final question.

I have extended the invitation to you, and I would not hesitate to extend it to the duly constituted representatives of the shop craft unions. I do not believe that there are others who are more suitable, perhaps, to extend this invitation to get this on the road. But I don't want it to fail for want of somebody extending the invitation.

Is it your feeling that this should come from the distinguished chairman of this committee, from the Secretary of Labor, from the President of the United States? Could I have you thinking in this regard?

Mr. WOLFE. So far as the carriers are concerned, it doesn't make too much difference who extends the invitation. We accept it now.

Mr. BROTZMAN. As of this moment, I am the only person who has extended one. So you have accepted my invitation. I would like to escalate this just a little bit, if I could, to have someone else do it in the interests of this country and in the interest of collective bargaining.

Continue on with your response.

Mr. WOLFE. I had about concluded, Mr. Brotzman.

I will say this, that it doesn't necessarily have to be an invitation, although perhaps that would be helpful. But however the arrangements are made to get the parties together, it is acceptable to us.

If we just adjourn the hearing and start right now, that would be all right with me. After all, time is running out on us.

Mr. BROTZMAN. I think this is correct. I think we all recognize that time is of the essence. I guess that has been stated about 1,500 different ways by my colleagues and probably by me in the last few days. We would like to see you get to a table and talk, communicate.

I am confident that by proceeding, you can sit down and work out something. You know the old saying that a fair settlement is better than a good lawsuit. I know this from my own legal experience, and I think every lawyer in the Congress realizes this is correct.

I would like to suggest most respectfully, Mr. Chairman, I have extended the invitation but I feel there are others who perhaps could better extend the invitation, to see that such a meeting is effected today. I really say this with all the sincerity that I can muster. I am hopeful, too; I think something good can come of it.

Thank you.