

RAHALL *Report*

RAILROAD RETIREMENT

by Congressman Nick Rahall

In the past few weeks, my offices has been flooded with letters, and rightfully so, from retired railroad workers who fear for the future of their pensions.

As part of the fiscal year 1983 Federal Budget, the Administration has proposed that the existing federally administered Railroad Retirement System be dismantled. Under this plan, all subsequent rail employment would be covered by social security and the Railroad Retirement Board, which administers the present system, would be eliminated.

Last year, the President requested that a ceiling of \$350 million be placed on funding for the benefits to retired railroad workers. I joined an effort to fully restore funding at \$440 million, but we were only successful in funding the program at \$379 million for the remainder of this fiscal year.

It is my belief that the Administration's latest proposal for the Railroad Retirement System will not contribute to the best interests of the railroad retiree. Without a federally administered program for industry-related benefits, retirees will have 20 unions and 50 to 60 railroads deliberating over both necessary benefit levels and any desired changes in benefits.

Further, it is my belief that railroad workers paid for these benefits during the years of their labor, and as such, entered into a contract with the federal government. What we are witnessing now represents nothing short of a move to break that contract with the American rail labor force.

For this reason, I have joined an effort in the House of Representatives to push a resolution, H.J. Res. 394, that would attempt to block the Administration's attempts to dismantle the Railroad Retirement System. It is an issue I feel very strongly about, and will work to it approved.