

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

January 15. I believe it is very important that we look at the whole area surrounding this situation. When we pick up the paper tonight we see an item to the effect that a number of CBC workers were fired because of irregularities.

● (10:10 p.m.)

If we look back to a very short time ago we will realize that the civil servants of this country were unquestionably being subjected to intimidation by the federal government. A typical example of this is the situation of people with 25 to 30 years' seniority who are receiving letters from the CNR advising them: We regret to advise you that your services are no longer required.

The only question I should like to put tonight is: Are we really trying to negotiate, or to encourage a confrontation? I should like to refer to the situation created by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) in so far as his fine specialists are concerned. The minister says he backs the force. The following appeared in a press article:

Labour Minister Bryce Mackasey is confident his new industrial peacekeeping force of five industry specialists will not get chewed up in battles between labour and management.

For one thing, the force will be backed up by Bryce Mackasey.

At a news conference today, the Labour Minister explained that the specialists will maintain regular contacts with senior union and management officials and will be able to identify obstacles to agreement long before the two parties collide in bargaining sessions.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the President of the Treasury Board, that he should ask the Minister of Labour to assign immediately one of these specialists to the federal negotiating bargaining table, because I am certain that in the present circumstances collective bargaining will never be achieved so far as this government is concerned.

My only purpose tonight in bringing this matter forward is to try to impress upon the government its importance. According to the news release, the Minister of Labour suggested that the experience with the traditional approach to conciliation has shown that government assistance frequently came too late to prevent the development of serious disputes. In a newspaper article we find the following:

Treasury Board President C. M. Drury said Tuesday that "every effort" is being made to conclude a satisfactory working agreement with 1,500 firemen at federal airports in Canada—

Mr. Drury said that the firemen had the option of seeking arbitration.

I suggest to the President of the Treasury Board that if we are looking for confrontation, that is all we will get. But, surely, to offer a 2 per cent increase to the penal institution employees, after which they end up with a 22.3 per cent increase, demonstrates that collective bargaining in the true sense of the word has not taken place. The Minister of Labour said:

By the time one of the parties had asked for conciliation, in the manner required by law, positions had often hardened to a degree that provided little room for manoeuvre.

Again I suggest that this is exactly the position in which the government finds itself today. The minister also said:

Introduction of the new industry specialist program reflects a determination to break with the traditional approach—to shift the emphasis from the settlement to the prevention of disputes.

I sincerely suggest to the minister that to achieve a settlement of disputes requires negotiation. I believe there is a general feeling of appreciation for this approach, but I also suggest in all humility that the Minister of Labour assign one of his new industrial specialists to beguile the President of the Treasury Board in order that the latter may appreciate what is going on in so far as negotiations are concerned. I am sure that ultimately he will convince the President of the Treasury Board that sincere relations cannot be entered into as frivolously and as temporarily as has recently been the case. I suggest that this country cannot stand this type of collective negotiation. Either we are sincere in setting up negotiations, or we will cause a confrontation. In conclusion let me quote the Minister of Labour, who said:

To maintain contact with the principal management officials and trade union leaders in a specified industry or industries and become familiar with their organizations, policies and practices—

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the greatest mistake the Minister of Labour has made to date is that he has not assigned one specialist to ensure that there will be collective bargaining as we know it.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that what I have just listened to is a request for information. The hon. member has been giving advice.

An hon. Member: How about an explanation?

Mr. Drury: As he says, he is making a plea to incorporate into the collective bargaining