

REQUEST FOR FEDERAL INTERVENTION IN DISPUTE WITH
FINANCE BRANCH EMPLOYEES

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, I will direct my question to the Minister of Labour. Due to the walk-out of employees at the Air Canada finance branch in Winnipeg last week, which is the second occasion since the 81 day strike last year due to Air Canada's repeated delays in fulfilling their 1973 contract with regard to job ratings, will the minister personally intervene to settle the labour-management relationship at Air Canada?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member's question is along the same lines as the question asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. They both concern the same area with regard to making the services of my department available. My answer is yes, I will make them available. I will look into this whole area to see what it is about. If we can be helpful, we certainly will.

Mr. McKenzie: In the interest of air safety, will the minister investigate whether flight performance quality control recording and billing and collecting procedures are being carried out during the labour problems at Air Canada's finance branch in Winnipeg?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, from the sound of the question, this seems to be more appropriately the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Transport. I will undertake on his behalf to look into the matter.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT AND EXCISE ACT

The House resumed, from Thursday, December 6, consideration in committee of Bill C-40, to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act—Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton)—Mr. Laniel in the chair.

On clause 1—

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether there is not still outstanding the point raised by the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary when Your Honour was in the chair with regard to the form of the ways and means motion and the wording of items 10 and 11 in the schedule with respect to naval vessels. Is Your Honour prepared to give a ruling on that matter, or do you wish to hear argument on it? The point itself had not been argued. My colleague raised the question and the Chair took it under advisement, but I think the point is sufficiently important that we settle it.

Excise

● (1550)

I think Your Honour has had access to the debates that took place on a similar matter when the House was discussing Bill C-259 in September of 1971. I am quite prepared to come to any accommodation with the Minister of Finance regarding amendment of the ways and means motion. This is one of those points of procedure that has crept in. I think the practice that was adopted in 1971 was a dangerous one; in my opinion, it unduly restricted the government as it has on this particular occasion. But if you conform with the regulations, there is no way that the government is entitled to bring in a bill based upon a ways and means motion.

The decision of Mr. Speaker Lamoureux was that if a ways and means motion was to spell out every word, every comma, and you had to cross every "t", then it should conform. My colleague from Winnipeg North Centre supported my proposition at the time and it was agreed that appropriate steps should be taken to tidy the matter up. We can agree, in the interval, that this is a point the procedure committee will have to take up, and perhaps the government will have to mend its ways regarding the format of its ways and means motions. In any event, that is the point which has been raised, and I am sorry I argued it before Your Honour while you were acting as Chairman. It should have been argued before you while you were in the Chair as Mr. Speaker, because that is where the point at issue was first raised, and quite properly so.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): On the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the flexible attitude adopted by the hon. member for Edmonton West. We are prepared to argue the point now, or when we get to the appropriate clause. I agree with the hon. gentleman that he has made the point early enough to argue it. I also appreciate his position that, depending on the ruling of the Chair, we can take whatever steps are necessary to put the matter right, if the Chair should so rule. This is an important point of order that this particular parliament should consider, and I am prepared to argue it at any time.

The Chairman: Order. I think the hon. member for Edmonton West raised a very important point of order to the mind of the Chair during consideration of the bill on second reading. In my opinion, that was not the time to solve the problem and I thought it might have been better to raise it at the outset of the debate. In any event, I think the committee is faced with a difficulty at this time and I am ready to listen to argument. The committee itself will, of course, have to make a decision as to the way to proceed; otherwise the Chair will have to rule as to the validity of the point of order. I invite the hon. member to make his point, and the minister has stated he is ready to make a contribution.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): With the greatest respect, Mr. Chairman, I find it a little difficult to argue this point with you in the chair as Chairman. It is a second reading matter and Mr. Speaker should be in the chair. There is the point that if the ruling should go against us, it can always be appealed when you are in your present position, whereas if you are in the position you were in at the time I raised it there can be no appeal. But be that as it may, with the greatest respect, the raising of a point of