

Railway Operations Act

ment, particularly when they should be settled outside parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Let those who advocate the bidding system tonight also take on the responsibility if there are more strikes which are pre-conditioned to be determined on the floor of parliament and if this should involve compulsory arbitration—and sometimes we hear this—let the people who are part of this bidding system take the responsibility for compulsory arbitration, something which none of us really want. I think this is the first disastrous step toward that end, and I think we should stop it right now and get back to the fundamental issue.

• (2220)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): If all parties concerned are convinced—and I am sure this is a reasonable thing to ask—that an arbitrator will be appointed, one who is a fair and reasonable man, he can then take into account all the factors and all the points that were made. He can look at *Hansard* and the arguments that have been advanced, the concerns of parliamentarians and of everyone else, and no doubt he will do that. That is also one of the fundamental guarantees of a fair and equitable settlement outside of parliament, the only place where it should be made.

There is no sense in my repeating these remarks.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): There is no sense in my repeating what this may do to the whole bargaining process, how it may lead to further disputes winding up on the floor of parliament, with each parliamentarian proposing a new variation and making subjective judgments with respect to further disputes that will wind up here in the future. Are the Conservative party and the NDP going to influence the conciliation board chairman with respect to one or another dispute?

I think that the step we are taking tonight is a very serious one indeed, and I believe that my party, and the government of which I am a member, are prepared to stand behind the principle that is embodied in this bill. We are in opposition to the amendments which get us into a bidding system, with the disastrous results which I have described.

I want to assure hon. members that I am not one who, during my involvement in political life, has ever been unsympathetic to the workers, especially the group of workers at the low end of the totem pole. Never in my political life have I been opposed to their interests.

An hon. Member: Except now.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): What I am ensuring is that they have an 8½ per cent floor and 30 cents instead of 34 cents or 38 cents.

Mr. Baldwin: Why 30 cents?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Because Mr. Justice Munroe recommended it.

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

Mr. Baldwin: Is this immutable and forever?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): No, not immutable, but because he made that determination and because under the bill we can appoint an arbitrator who can take into account all the wage considerations. If you want to talk about the non ops, who are the main concern in the amendment, perhaps the arbitrator will come to the conclusion that more than 34 cents or 35 cents should be given, but it is he who should make that determination and take into account the differentiation in the cost of living since Mr. Craig Munroe's report of July 13.

I also want to point out that we do not want our position nor do I want my position to be interpreted as meaning that somehow we are opposed to these workers getting more.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): It is quite the opposite. Any effort that I have made was to assist the parties in arriving at a settlement outside of the House which in my view, had it been successful, would no doubt have resulted in the workers getting more than is proposed in the bill. I am now saying it publicly that, in my own judgment, I feel that that might have been the result. But it was not, and we are here, and I think we should follow this line because otherwise we will end up in a hopeless quagmire when it comes to the resolution of future labour disputes.

For those reasons I think I have the support of my party, and I believe these amendments, and the bidding system which started off with the 34 cents and the 38 cents, should be rejected by all hon. members.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Chairman, I want to say just a word because I have been over this ground earlier today. I will repeat my understanding and my approval of the fact that we are not here to try to write a collective agreement, and certainly we should not be involved in any bidding or auction game, or anything of that sort.

I want to emphasize that with regard to the second year of the agreement the change that we are proposing is a change which gives the non-operating unions the same percentage increase, as good a deal or no worse a deal, depending upon one's point of view, as the other two unions. It is not justifiable to ask non-ops to go back to work on a poorer settlement in percentage terms for 1974 than the other two parties.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I doubt that there is any real difference of opinion about that so far as 1974 is concerned. So far as 1973 is concerned, we are simply prepared to support a determination by parliament that the rate of inflation for 1973 has exceeded expectations by that per cent, and it is on that basis that we are recommending the 4 cent increase. But I want to say that that is the only departure from the recommendation of the chairman of the committee that I am prepared to support. Therefore, I am not prepared to support the subamendment recommending 38 cents, and I will be voting against it.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Why?