

gram? Are we talking about labour's role in it? If we are, we shouldn't be here tonight; we should be taking an opposition day from the New Democratic Party to do some soul searching to find out whether the Anti-inflation Board is functioning properly, whether the program is being applied justly, whether we need to make modifications, because for once in our life we have a common objective which is fighting inflation. If we are not fighting it right, let's hear about it.

But that is not why we are here tonight. We are here because in the opinion of the Speaker there is an emergency, and that emergency arises, it is said, because the CLC made a decision to withdraw from all the government boards. I am saying that this is inaccurate. One thing that the mover and the seconder of this motion should have done at the beginning of this debate was to apologize for having unintentionally mislead the House.

An hon. Member: Intentionally.

Mr. Mackasey: If it were not for the passage to which I have referred, the Speaker would never have permitted this debate under Standing Order 26. He might have said the subject could be discussed on the next opposition day, or on estimates, or during the question period. But he would never have allowed this method of allowing a discussion of something which has not happened and is not necessarily about to happen.

I do not want to misrepresent the CLC. I want to be their friend. Compared with the NDP, the Canadian Labour Congress is one of the most responsible organizations of the country. They did not say they were walking out of all government organizations, thus negating their influence on behalf of their members. They have an obligation to be on these boards. They exist to look after the workers of this country, and the workers are entitled to be represented on key boards, the Economic Council and others. That is so under the statute. The union has an obligation—not a privilege but an obligation—to make the views of its members known. To the best of my knowledge their contribution has always been equal to, and on most occasions better than that of management or the academic world or any other group.

● (2300)

Now to turn round and have parliament, the press, spectators, opposition members, and the staff here on the spurious—

Mr. Benjamin: Quit crying about it.

Mr. Mackasey: I know the hon. member would sit here seven days a week, 24 hours a day, isolated from reality. The reality is, as the hon. member should know, that we are here under false pretences. We are not here to discuss the Anti-Inflation Board. We are not even here to discuss any alleged weaknesses in the act or the appeal section. We are here because we have been informed that the Canadian Labour Congress has made a decision based on their concern—

Mr. Symes: Read the whole motion.

Labour Conditions

Mr. Mackasey: If the motion had been worded to the effect that the Canadian Labour Congress was considering the possibility of withdrawing from these various boards in light of their disaffection with the section of the act that may or may not deny them an appeal, then on the strength of that I do not think the Speaker would have called for this debate tonight. But I can understand the Speaker calling for the debate when he is told that the Canadian Labour Congress, representing two million Canadian workers, is about to "withdraw from all areas of co-operation with the federal government in every province", "leading inevitably to further breakdown in civil order in Canada". That is a pretty serious statement.

Is it not an awful condemnation of the labour movement to presume that they would be so irresponsible as to bring about a break down in civil order in this country? Who is causing labour to be labelled irresponsible if it is not the New Democratic Party? I would imagine that the Canadian Labour Congress are about to disassociate themselves from this very radical and rash statement.

Mr. Benjamin: Phone and ask them.

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. member says phone and ask them. Isn't that a great contribution! He does not go to the bathroom without phoning somebody and asking them if he can go. Without consulting the CLC he would not be able to find his way to the washroom. What a great contribution he makes. I hope he sends it to all of his constituents. He can tell them "I told the government to phone the CLC and ask them". Ask them what? Ask them if they are going to recommend a breakdown of civil order in Canada? The labour movement in this country has never been irresponsible. It has never been radical to that point. I am surprised that his so-called friends of the labour movement are suggesting that the Canadian Labour Congress would be so irresponsible as to start some movement that would lead inevitably "to further breakdown of civil order in Canada." That is a pretty serious charge.

I will not deal further with the New Democratic Party. They stand condemned on the sheer logic of the matter, if I may sum it up in that way. However, I should like to refer to something that must please the members from the Atlantic provinces, and that is that the Irving company is becoming so pro-labour after all these years. That is a wonderful thing! I do remember some of my history, though I say with respect not nearly as much as some other ministers, and if the Irving company really felt so strongly for its workers, it could put some of the money from the increase arrived at through collective bargaining into a trust on behalf of the workers until the administrator came along, not simply to keep their operation going but for the good of the workers. That would be consistent, and until the act were revised, repealed, or amended they could institute an appeal on behalf of their workers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please.

Mr. Mackasey: Why don't they do that? That would get around—