

*Air Traffic Control Dispute*

appointed I am informed that the association must agree.

**Mr. Benson:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Does the hon. member who has the floor accept a question from the hon. minister?

**Mr. Lewis:** I will gladly, Mr. Speaker. My only concern is that because of these interruptions I will be taking up the time which might be allotted to other members who might wish to have the floor.

**Mr. Benson:** Perhaps I should rise on a question of privilege, rather than to ask a question. I did not wish to mislead the house in respect of this appointment. My officials did speak with C.A.T.C.A. with regard to the appointment, but there are two other associations involved which were not I believe consulted.

**Mr. Lewis:** This is the kind of thing I really regret. Had the minister originally said that the major organization so far as numbers are concerned, or one of them, had been consulted in respect of the recommendation of Judge Robinson, that would have helped the situation. But he did leave with me the impression that this was a unilateral agreement. That was the phrase he used. This is where the government has such a terrible responsibility. These negotiations have gone on over the past 18 months. The government was faced with the threat of a strike last May and as a result of that and in order to avoid a strike the government undertook to make the appointment and discussed it with C.A.T.C.A.

• (5:30 p.m.)

In a letter to C.A.T.C.A. the government said—I forget the exact words—it would give serious consideration to the findings of the commissioner. The government said it would give immediate consideration to those findings. The President of the Treasury Board cannot come here and say that these are terrible people, that they have the government in a bind because they are going to have a strike next Tuesday, when he has had in his hands for five weeks a report from the commissioner. The minister also said: We met with these people every time they asked us to meet with them. He may be right. I am not questioning him; I have never had occasion to do so.

He had a duty to ask them to meet with him, and not wait for them to come to him. I say to him that he knew last May or June that these men were going to take strike action if

[Mr. Lewis.]

they did not get what they considered satisfactory, and he has no reason to sit back in his chair and wait for them to invite him to meet with them. In the interests of Canada, in the interests of the Canadian people, he should have been on his toes and got them into his office the day after he received the report and said: Gentlemen, we cannot agree with this.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. gentleman a question. He said he was going to take up all the time allotted to him, so I am sure he will be fair enough to allow a question.

**Mr. MacDonald (Prince):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, during the speech of the President of the Treasury Board we tried to ask questions. The minister has now risen for a third time to interrupt the hon. member. I think this is quite incorrect. If this is to be allowed, I should have been granted the privilege of asking a similar question of the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince (Mr. MacDonald) was allowed to ask a question.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I realize it is within my power to have the question asked, but I think I get your wink that I should not do so.

**Mr. Speaker:** It might facilitate the task of the Chair if the hon. member refused to answer questions.

**Mr. Lewis:** That is what I thought I saw in your eye, Mr. Speaker, at this distance, and I intend to follow that advice.

I am confident that is the principle involved in this matter. I say to the Minister of Transport and to the President of the Treasury Board that if they found an error in the calculation or in the premise about equality of age, they had the authority by order in council, which they could pass in five minutes, to remit this report to Judge Robinson. They could tell him that in their view he had omitted something, and would he look at it again and hear further representations on the point.

I am not prepared to accept the statement of the President of the Treasury Board. I have been for too long involved in this type of negotiation to accept the statement of either side in a dispute as being "it". I have no doubt that the air traffic control people have their views about what happened. I could almost guess what their view would be from the quick glance I have had at the report. The