

Oral Questions

[Translation]

MANPOWER

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to introduce a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity.

In view of the fact that there is apparently no reduction in unemployment, that the Canadian people has gained confidence in the LIP program for the creation of jobs and the eradication of unemployment and owing to the considerable number of serious projects suggested under the program for 1976-77, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier):

That this House advise the government to earmark supplementary estimates for this program, immediately increasing the estimates of the Department of Manpower for that item.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion of the hon. member. Under the provisions of Standing Order 43, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there such consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent; the motion therefore cannot be put.

● (1110)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

LEGALITY OF OCTOBER 14TH DAY OF PROTEST—REASON FOR DELAY IN COMING TO A DECISION

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, in the absence today of the Minister of Labour I wonder if I could direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that yesterday the Minister of Labour refused to say whether the government views the national strike as legal but went on to say by implication that it would be illegal unless the protest took place at lunch hour or off-working hours, and in view of conflicting decisions yesterday in different provinces which resulted in the strike being legal in British Columbia and not in Ontario, and given the well publicized fact that working people and others have been concerned about whether illegal action was appropriate in our democratic system, can the Prime Minister now advise whether he or his ministers or any of them ever asked for and obtained legal advice indicating that this strike would be legal in some provinces and not legal in others.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Surely, Mr. Speaker, it is not for the Government of Canada to decide what is legal or not in particular provinces from the point of view of provincial law and collective agreements under provincial labour legislation. The federal position as stated by the minister, which is quite clear, is that if the protest does not involve illegal actions then the Minister of Labour said he could understand the right of individuals or associations to protest policies that they disagreed with by protesting in a legal way; in other words, if they protest by demonstrating during their lunch hour or after their hours of work. If on the contrary they are breaking a contract, then of course it becomes illegal and the Government of Canada cannot condone it; on the contrary we condemn it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraser: It is all very well for government members to applaud, Mr. Speaker, but the question is one which all the public is asking. It seems very strange—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a supplementary question would he put it forthwith?

Mr. Fraser: Can the Prime Minister then tell this House, in view of the fact that for many months the government has known that the CLC was armed with the authority given it at the May convention to call for a national strike, despite the fact that members of the government did not feel it would take place, why there has been no direction from his Minister of Labour or from the government in general as to what the parameters of this particular form of protest ought to be in order to keep it legal, keeping in mind as the government well knows that this strike would be breaking a great many contracts which were not within federal jurisdiction, and especially in view of the fact that the Minister of Labour has confused the public even more by hoping that the strike would be a success.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member must have missed what the Minister of Labour said yesterday. He said quite clearly, as I understood him—and he said this outside the House also—that he could not condone illegal action but there was a way of protesting which was perfectly legal. The hon. member knows this. That is the position of the government. If under federal labour legislation there are any illegal acts we will condemn them, and we reserve the right to act in whatever way is appropriate to correct that situation. That is the federal responsibility and a responsibility which we hope the House supports. But we cannot say what position the provinces will take within areas in their own jurisdiction under laws they have passed. I could give the hon. member an opinion. I suppose it would be much the same as that of the federal government. If provincial labour laws are broken and something illegal is done, then I hope those concerned will be condemned in those particular provinces.

Mr. Fraser: The question, Mr. Speaker, is simply this: can the Prime Minister explain why there has been no leadership