

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Ronning.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fairweather: I had the pleasure of hearing both of them over the C.B.C. But does the government not feel now that the time has come to act?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The question has already been answered, Mr. Speaker.

MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY OPERATION ACT

PROVISION FOR RESUMPTION OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS AND SETTLEMENT OF LABOUR DISPUTE

On the order; Special Order No. 1:

August 29—The Prime Minister—second reading of Bill No. C-230, an Act to provide for the resumption of operations of railways and for the settlement of the existing dispute with respect to terms and conditions of employment between railway companies and their employees.

Mr. Douglas: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, without unanimous consent the house cannot proceed to second reading of a bill which was given first reading only today. I indicated earlier that we were prepared to give unanimous consent only if there was agreement to adjourn after the main statement had been made by the minister introducing the bill. Apparently that was unacceptable to certain members in the house. We therefore objected and when Your Honour said "Later this day?" we said "No". We certainly made it clear that we were not giving unanimous consent to second reading of this legislation today except under the conditions I specified.

Mr. Speaker: I have to say that I did not hear the negative comments which may have been made when the call was made from the Chair and my understanding is that there was unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Certainly this is a very serious matter and I would not want to proceed unless there were a clear understanding that there is unanimous consent. Hon. members at this end of the chamber will confirm that there was no stout opposition heard from the other end of the chamber when the motion was put by the Chair. Certainly no such opposition was heard by the Chair, and I called the motion as having

[Mr. Fairweather.]

been carried by unanimous consent. I should like to hear from other hon. members on the point raised by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Speaker, I was one of those who objected and I would say I am almost as stout as anyone in the house.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make a suggestion on this point. In view of the desire of hon. members to study the bill, we might proceed with second reading and adjourn from six o'clock to eight o'clock to give hon. members an opportunity to do so. Perhaps that course would be agreeable to the house.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, this is very important legislation. We have agreed to waive the 48 hours notice; we have agreed to first reading being proceeded with. But I think hon. members are entitled to have the period overnight in which to study this legislation before expressing an opinion on it. There can be no possible excuse for ramming this legislation through without adequate time for close scrutiny and examination. We are not going to be rushed or bullied into passing legislation which we have not had an opportunity to examine carefully. We have only had it put on our desks. It is not simple legislation; it has far reaching repercussions. It will lay down precedents for the future in dealing with labour matters, and certainly members of the house should have the period overnight in which to study it.

On behalf of our party I would say that we are quite prepared to have second reading called if it is merely for the purpose of allowing the Prime Minister or the minister introducing the legislation to make a full statement, but we are not prepared to proceed with the debate today. We think hon. members have the right to study this bill in order that they may make comments which are intelligent and as a result of careful examination. It should not be done on the basis of a very hasty and cursory glance at this very complicated legislation.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I am fully mindful of the co-operation we have had from the house in removing some of the procedural difficulties in getting this legislation before the house today. I thought that was made clear earlier. The government has