

Mr. Mackasey: Now, Mr. Chairman—

Some hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Mackasey: Because I am overwhelmed I will sit down.

The Deputy Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question.

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Chairman: The question is on the amendment to the motion.

Some hon. Members: Amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Chairman: Maybe hon. members are confused, but the hon. member for St. John's East has moved a motion to amend the bill, and the motion of the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre is an amendment to the motion proposed by the hon. member for St. John's East. The question is on the amendment to the motion.

● (2330)

Amendment to the amendment (Mr. Benjamin) negatived: Yeas, 26; nays, 181.

The Deputy Chairman: I declare the subamendment defeated. Is the committee ready for the question on the amendment?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Chairman, I rise to say a few words at this stage on behalf of my colleagues and myself. I did not participate in the debate on the subamendment because I felt that last night I had stated our position and there was not much purpose in my repeating it. But I must say that I listened to pieces of sophistry from the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Labour that are really disturbing. As a matter of fact, what the government and what this parliament had before them was a number of suggestions as to how this dispute should be settled and on what basis the workers should be ordered to go back to work. The government chose one set of suggestions and the NDP chose another, not in a bidding or an auction but because we sincerely believe that the set of suggestions we make to this parliament gives the workers justice in a way which the set of suggestions that the government proposes does not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: And then there is this sophistry about our not being in a position to make a choice, to use our judgment. It has been said, who are we to know? That kind of hypocritical modesty does not impress me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: Every day of this government's life it makes judgments of that sort. It makes judgments on who shall receive a LIP grant and who shall be refused one; who shall receive an OFY grant and who shall be refused one; whose sentence to death shall be commuted to life on the basis of evidence that someone else has received, that the cabinet looks over and then decides on the result. The

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government had all the information that any blessed arbitrator could have. It had the briefs from both parties; it had the verbatim report of what took place before the board of conciliation; it had the reports of all the mediators; and it had all the information about the cost of living, about productivity, about salaries and wages in comparable occupations outside the railways.

All that information was before them. It is fatuous, hypocritical and dishonest to say that they were not in a position to make a judgment. The fact is that they made a judgment to give the workers as little as they conscientiously could. So they dragged out the chairman's report, and I say particularly because the railways had announced two or three days ago publicly, for the benefit of the eloquent and misleading Minister of Transport—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman. I am not saying that the proposal made by the NDP is more than the amount the employees were ready to accept.

Mr. Lewis: I do not know where the Minister of Transport got that, but I do not think that kind of remark is appropriate.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: I say the government made a choice, one which is unfair and unjust to the workers and would force parliament to make the workers go back to work, against their will and without justice or decency.

Then, as I see it, my friends in the Conservative Party decided that some increase had to be given. They agreed with the government that we should not make the judgment on the best and most just basis on which to send the workers back, but that some increase should be given. The workers had spoken to them, and they agreed it should be higher. So they concocted a validation to give them a few cents more. I do not care what their concoction was. I am not satisfied with what they propose. But I know that this bill will pass before this night or next morning is out, and that the workers will be required by law to go back to work. Therefore, my colleagues and I will vote for the Tory amendment, much as we think that it is not enough. We will support the amendment because we want the workers to get as much as possible when they go back to work, even if that is not enough.

I must admit that I say with a great deal of hesitancy and regret that I have to support the amendment. The Leader of the Opposition says that his party wants to give the non-operating employees justice in the second year, and they want to give them the same increase as the other groups are getting. Let me tell him first that they will not receive the same increase, because the same formula of 6½ per cent on January 1, 1974, and another 1½ per cent on July 1, 1974, on a base of \$3.80 odd, which is what it will be, is a great deal less than the same percentage on a base of \$1.40. So he is not giving them the same, and the increase he proposes is three-quarters of 1 per cent on an average.

What he has proposed in place of what the government has in the bill is an average increase for 1974 of 7.25 per cent instead of 6.5 per cent. In other words, he offers them