

Air Traffic Control Dispute

that time and time again, because of the prolonged negotiations and the dragging out of the processes of conciliation, labour and management have become impatient. They have only been going through the process, waiting for the time when they will throw the problem on to the table of the Minister of Labour. They have been waiting for him to deal with the problem.

However, Mr. Speaker, they do not want compulsory arbitration. Labour does not want it and neither do we. We do not believe in it if we are to maintain the principle of free collective bargaining. But labour and management do expect the government to negotiate as a third party in bringing labour and management together, and in this the government has once again failed.

The government say that they believe in free collective bargaining, that negotiations and meetings are taking place—two hours today, two hours tomorrow, a break for dinner, a break for the week end. Is this the way to conduct negotiations and to hold meetings in order to bring about a solution to a problem, Mr. Speaker? Certainly not. Anyone who knows anything about management and labour negotiations knows that you cannot break off; you must continue talking. The government is talking utter nonsense when it says that it met with these people on the west coast for two hours and then broke off for dinner for three hours; that it met them again the next day and then broke off for the week end. That is no way to carry on negotiations to bring about settlement, but it is the method that the government has adopted.

A few weeks ago when we had this disruption on the west coast involving the longshoremen, the Minister of Labour went to Vancouver and evidently put forward some formula that the stevedoring firms rejected. The minister came back to Ottawa and the government were ready to put through legislation to appoint an administrator who was to hold talks with the stevedoring firms. I suggest to the government that, as employers, they are failing in their attempt to resolve this question by not putting forward legislation to force these people back to work. The government should be doing the same thing that it wanted to do in respect of the stevedoring firms. I suggest that they bring in an administrator to run the affairs of the government.

This matter can be solved, Mr. Speaker. There is some hidden reason that has not been explained to parliament as yet for this

[Mr. Starr.]

obstinate attitude of the government, which has now injected itself into this very serious problem. The only thing bringing about this situation with which we will be faced next Tuesday night, December 20, is the inaction of this government. The government must be frank with us today and must tell this house the specific reasons for rejecting the recommendations of Judge Robinson.

Do not let the government tell us, Mr. Speaker, that they are waiting for the second report, because the second report has nothing to do with the settlement of this dispute or with the strike that has now been set. Yesterday, we were talking about the danger of this situation and about the necessity for taking immediate action. If the government is unable to take immediate action, then parliament should be given the opportunity of expressing the feelings of the people of this country and of advising the government.

The reason given by the government for inaction yesterday was that our apprehensions about the result of the strike vote might be unfounded. The situation was hypothetical in that we were presuming the strike vote would be carried by a majority of the union members. What the result was going to be was quite obvious to everybody except the government—or were they using this as a smoke-screen or an excuse? It is now evident, the result of the strike vote having been made known, that the government were actually throwing a smokescreen over the members of this chamber in order to procrastinate for another day.

Mr. Munro: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member who has the floor wish to receive a question from the parliamentary secretary?

Mr. Munro: Is the hon. member suggesting that mediation can only be successful when a minister of the crown intervenes?

Mr. Starr: Of course not.

Mr. Woolliams: He never said that.

Mr. Starr: There are occasions when this is successful, but it has certainly not been successful when any member of this government has been carrying on mediation.

But in this case, the situation is a great deal different because the government has appointed a mediator, a person who is experienced in labour-management disputes and