

such matters and wishes to speak, I will give him an opportunity to do so. But let me ask the minister of manpower how will union leaders explain the fact that 6 per cent is good enough, when he was a member of a government which gave its approval and wholehearted support to an increase of 31 to 34 per cent?

That is where the trouble began. I have no doubt whatever, and I have reason to believe this is entirely correct, that if it had not been for the Prime Minister's monkeying with the processes of conciliation in connection with the seaway workers and the longshoremen there would have been no difficulty in securing agreement in so far as the railway unions are concerned.

It is obvious that this nation is in a critical position; but parliament cannot allow itself to be pushed around by a prime minister or a government which, having created a situation and failed to act, now comes before the House of Commons and contends: Whatever our mistakes, our dilatoriness, we now need to pass legislation; the situation is serious. Was it not serious ten days ago? Was it not recognized in every part of this country for several months that there was going to be a strike? If anybody challenges this, I have here some excerpts from Liberal newspapers across Canada, which, without exception, have been warning this government. I do not know what is required to wake this government. Is there something to awaken the lethargy of a government which has refused to act? They have postponed action and procrastinated, and when they finally found themselves in difficulties they have called parliament.

We want to act as responsible members of this nation. Did we not have the right to ask the government, as we have over and over again, to do something? However, I do not know whether what is being done is part of the new Liberal program, under which the Liberals are seeking more labour support and wooing the unions with a newsletter. I do not have time to go into that, Mr. Speaker, but this is courtship of a high variety. In the labour newsletter the Prime Minister is speaking to ordinary men. The heading in the *Globe and Mail* indicates that the unions are being wooed with a newsletter. Was that part of the preparatory course?

The wooing of any group of Canadians is not in keeping with government responsibility. You do not do it by having the members of the cabinet committee dealing with a labour dispute away on the week end when

*Legislation Respecting Railway Matters* things are serious. It is laudable to go fishing. I would like to have heard what President Johnson said to the Prime Minister and what the Prime Minister said to him with regard to this question, because the other day the President said he was talking to the leader of a country who said to him, "I only wish I could keep things under control the way you do". The cost of living in Canada is mounting faster than in the United States, yet no action has been taken. It is a frightful commentary when a Prime Minister comes before parliament, on bended knee and says, in effect: Do something to get me out of this.

● (9:20 p.m.)

We want the railways in operation. The economy of Canada is being damaged. A very influential writer has said the government thought a strike would not do any harm if it lasted a week or ten days. A lady, writing in *Le Devoir* has said the government secured information as to the point to which a strike would not be economically harmful. This afternoon we heard words of warning, sage and strong, brought forward by the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg (Mr. Crouse). What about the prairie wheat situation? What about the export situation across Canada? I say this to the government: We offered you co-operation ten days or two weeks ago. We joined with the press across Canada in asking you to convene parliament before the strike began.

What is there in this bill that you could not have had after it became clear there was going to be a strike? Why did you not act? What was the reason? I can only conclude the reason was that you did not particularly care, and you possibly believed if there was a strike it would get you out of your difficulties.

I read now in translation from the article in *Le Devoir* dated August 25 and written by Evelyn Dumas-Gagnon:

According to a confidential report submitted to the cabinet a rail strike will surely be serious, but the country's economy can support it rather easily for a week or even for two weeks.

What was the attitude of the government? The Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) said on August 22 that he hoped the work stoppage could be reduced to a minimum of days. What a hopeless attitude to take. I have already mentioned what the proposed minister of manpower said at Nicolet on August 21. I say, Mr. Speaker, this government stands convicted of a careless disregard of the