

the principle of democracy within unions demand such action?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has put forward a proposition which might be worth considering at a later date, but for the time being I think it would be premature for the government to intervene and tell the unions how they should run their business.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—REASON FOR REFUSAL TO LEGISLATE AN END TO THE STRIKE

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): I wonder if the Prime Minister is thinking of Easter as the proper date.

A few minutes ago at a press conference the Postmaster General stated that there was, and I quote: "nothing more to negotiate." In view of the fact that further negotiations will therefore be useless, why does the government still refuse to legislate an end to the strike?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The question seems somewhat rhetorical. Strikes have happened before, and government has not always legislated an end to those strikes. Strikes are an economic weapon used by one side in the bargaining process, and the natural course for that weapon is to run its course against the members. When we find that it hits the public even more strongly than the right to free collective bargaining, that is the point at which the government intervenes.

POSSIBLE REOPENING OF MAIL BOXES—REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF AMOUNT OF MAIL THAT WILL BE MOVED

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): The government has in the past said that the time to intervene is when no further useful negotiations would take place.

May I put a supplementary to the Postmaster General, Mr. Speaker. At a press conference a few minutes ago the minister said that mail boxes will be reopened. Can he tell the House how much mail will be moved in relation to the normal volume or is this just window dressing?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, that will depend to what extent the public uses the mail boxes!

An hon. Member: Are you talking about the canine public?

Mr. Mackasey: I might remind the hon. gentleman the position he is now taking is diametrically opposed to the one he took when the firefighters at Vancouver airport were off work illegally.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

LEVEL OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSION RESULTING FROM SYNCRUDE PRODUCTION—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO REDUCE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and

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Resources. The government acknowledged last week that while some \$100 million has been spent on the Syncrude project it does not yet have representation on the heretofore non-existent board of directors that is ultimately going to manage that project. In the absence of the Minister of the Environment and in view of the fact that recent reports indicate that sulphur dioxide emissions from the Syncrude plant when it goes on stream in late 1978, will be roughly seven times greater than that which the use of present technology would produce, and in light of the fact that this sulphur dioxide is dangerous to human health and its effects will be spread over a number of provinces, can the minister assure the House that the government, by whatever means, direct or indirect, will not permit Syncrude to proceed with production as long as this level of emission will result therefrom?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to correct the misconception in the preamble of the hon. member's question. I did not indicate that the federal government was not part of the ongoing planning and project management of the Syncrude project. I did say they did not now hold a position on the board of directors but there is a Canadian federal presence on the management committee which is in fact the project management operation.

As to the second part of the question, I am sure the hon. member would want to address that to the Minister of the Environment. Quite clearly, he has indicated a major problem and one about which the government is very concerned.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I assume the minister must know the answer, although he is not the Minister of the Environment. Was the issue of the level of pollution by sulphur dioxide and related to that the control procedures to be implemented by Syncrude, brought before the management committee to which the minister referred, and on which the federal government does have representation? Was there discussion and if so, what was the position taken by the federal government representatives on that committee?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I think this question should be referred to the Minister of the Environment.

● (1420)

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, does the minister say—I do not ask this argumentatively—that the cabinet has not decided on this matter, that, therefore, he does not know the government's position, and that is why he refers the question to the minister who is not in the House?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I referred this matter to the Minister of the Environment because that minister is responsible for the environmental area in question.