

Irving Appeal

that have taken place during the currency of this strike which is now of some six months' duration. Today's question period, of course, was no exception because representatives of all opposition parties put questions. In the past, questions have been put by representatives on the government side. So there can be no doubt about the importance of this strike and its very wide-ranging effect, as well as the desirability that this House might address itself to the problem.

However, there are two or three continuing questions, not the least of which is that it is a strike in the private sector, as I indicated the first time it was raised. I indicated last Wednesday that there was some trouble with the question of jurisdiction. May I say to all hon. members that there can no longer be any trouble with the problem of jurisdiction. The strike existed prior to the introduction of federal controls in respect of wages and prices. However, the operation of the statute, the operation of the Anti-Inflation Board, and the decision now of the administrator, clearly establish a connection with this parliament vis-à-vis this particular strike which otherwise would in no way come under the jurisdiction of this parliament. Therefore, the jurisdictional question can be laid to rest now.

That, however, does not eliminate all the problems facing the Chair. One is, that with repeated applications under this Standing Order, it would appear that continued rejections by the Chair begin to draw the Chair into taking sides in the merits of the dispute, which is certainly not what I want to do and, I hope, is certainly not seen in that light by hon. members. The fact is that last week, when the matter was raised, I indicated that the administrator, pursuant to the legislation, was in the course of commencing his duties as envisaged by that legislation. If it was the case that he had been derelict in those duties and had not investigated the situation, or had failed to act or failed to come to a decision which was precipitating a work stoppage, that might be one side of the coin. The fact of the matter is that at that time I refused an application for an emergency debate because the administrator was just beginning his examination of this situation.

In the interval, it is obvious—as is contained in the notice of motion of the hon. member—that the administrator has completed his work and has made his decision. That is the normal function of the administrator as envisaged in the legislation which was, of course, passed by this House a short time ago. I could scarcely hold that the normal operation of the administrator within the intent of that legislation could be constituted as an emergency which should precipitate a debate. Whether that has an effect on the collective bargaining system generally, surely must have been envisaged in the legislation, and if it is a matter of general concern about the collective bargaining system and its welfare that, again, might be a proper subject for discussion on an allotted day. But if there is a situation in the Irving case and its example to the rest of the nation, one of the difficulties is that the workers are at work in the Irving company, and if the rest of the nation were to follow that example, presumably anything but a continuing difficulty would exist and other strikes might be settled—I do not know.

The fact is that I can scarcely consider the Irving example as an emergency, nor can I say that the administrator

[Mr. Speaker.]

does not appear to be fulfilling his duties within the terms of the legislation as envisaged. If I were to extend the precedent pursuant to Standing Order 26 every time an administrator, pursuant to this legislation, comes down with a decision one way or the other, or is called upon to intervene and make a decision, this place might be looked upon as a court of appeal against his decision. If I were to accept that example of the effect of the administrator's decision in the Irving case, how could I refuse it in a number of other cases in which the administrator might be involved in the near future? I do not think I could: it seems to me it would be extending the precedent too greatly.

On the other hand, again I say that if through the days that follow there is a continuing work stoppage in other areas of this industry, and if in fact there is some breakdown of the understanding of the legislation, or it fails to operate, that might be a cause for reapplication. But the fact of the matter is that the administrator has functioned as envisaged in the legislation, he was put in place as the legislation envisaged, and he appears to have acted, and acted quickly. The workers in the Irving case are at work; the plant is operating. Unless there is some dereliction of duty, a breakdown in the functioning of the legislation, or some work stoppage to which the House could address itself that is clearly important, it would seem to me at the moment the legislation is functioning as was envisaged by this parliament when it was passed a short time ago and, therefore, for the moment at least I ought not to grant an emergency debate.

I again say that I regret the fact that repeated applications under this rule are beginning to draw the Chair into the position of taking sides in the issue. I have tried very hard not to do that and to simply decide whether there are some grounds, with reasonable precedent, upon which I ought to set aside the regular business of the House in order to precipitate a debate pursuant to Standing Order 26. However, as long as the legislation is functioning as it was envisaged when it was passed by the House a short time ago, I fear that, without stretching precedents beyond all control, I cannot consider such a debate at this time.

● (1510)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

[Translation]

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: 3,581, 3,757, 3,762, 3,782, 3,811, 3,814, 3,820, 3,898, 3,904, 3,916 and 3,936.

[Text]

AIR FARES

Question No. 3,581—**Mr. Cossitt:**

1. What was the total amount paid in air fares in each of the past three years for which figures are available by the Department of