

provided for 12.21 per cent and the AIB rolled back the settlement to 12.21 per cent.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada, negotiating with Treasury Board on behalf of the railway mail clerks, in a two year contract running from January, 1975, negotiated a settlement of 15.6 per cent. The guidelines called for 14 per cent but the Anti-Inflation Board approved the settlement of 15.6 per cent, which is 1.6 per cent above the guidelines. For the year 1977 the railway mail clerks received three increases of 5.8 per cent, 7.3 per cent and 5.1 per cent, totalling 18.2 per cent. This was 3 per cent above the guidelines. The board approved the first two increases taking effect in June, 1977.

In the case of the penitentiary service, in a contract commencing in October, 1976, a settlement of 12.44 per cent was negotiated. The AIB guidelines allowed 8 per cent, yet the AIB recommended and approved the 12.44 per cent. All that the air traffic controllers are asking is that the package they were asking for be submitted to the AIB, and the controllers will abide by the AIB's recommendation.

I also want to deal a little further with why we oppose this bill. We do not oppose the idea of ending the strike and legislating the controllers back to work, but we do oppose using this legislation to depart from the precedents and practices of previous back to work legislation by making no provision for an independent arbitrator to make a decision on the package which would be binding on both sides. Surely we should not sit here and legislate a pay package for the government's employees; that is an unheard of, untenable and indefensible position for this parliament to take, let alone for the government, the President of the Treasury Board, and the Minister of Labour to take.

I am surprised the Minister of Labour has the nerve to present such a bill as this. I recall hearing speeches of his in the House on legislation that did provide for an independent arbitrator in back to work legislation; on those occasions he prided himself in not having parliament legislate a pay package for government employees. Why was this not done in this case? Why the exception? What else is going on which we do not know about? Or is this just another plain case of stubbornness on the part of the Department of Transport? As I have said before in this House, the minister is a walking disaster looking for a place to happen. Everything he has touched since coming to this parliament as a cabinet minister has hurt people. Everything he has tried has caused disputes, fights, arguments, and some measure of disunity or alienation somewhere in the country.

It seems to me that in this instance it was time for the Minister of Labour to stiffen his back and to get this matter settled in a proper, honourable, positive and honest manner. If the Minister of Labour had told his two colleagues, the Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board, to get the package over to the AIB, get their decision and abide by it whatever the ruling, things would be different; but no, the government wants to make the AIB's ruling for them. That is what it wants parliament to do. It would be tempting for the members of the AIB to resign since their

functions are being usurped by government legislation which judges awards made under the Anti-Inflation Board legislation and regulations. Surely that is not the position for this parliament to take, let alone the government, and it is the fundamental reason why we cannot vote for this legislation on second reading.

● (1740)

We earnestly hope that the Minister of Labour will persuade his colleagues to accept an amendment, and it does not particularly matter whether it comes from a member of one of the opposition parties or whether it is moved by a government member so long as it does something about an independent arbitrator who would decide on what would be a fair and proper package which both sides can accept, and which will then be subjected to the review of the AIB.

Why should members of the House get the Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board off the hook and out of a mess of their own creation? Why should we be responsible for bailing them out? I hope that, if nothing else, this debate will show to the public how inept and double-dealing these ministers have been and that that has been the basic cause of the strike. I hope that the official opposition will join us. I have listened to their spokesman on this and he did an excellent job of tearing the bill apart—almost as good a job as my leader did—but then he said he will vote for the bill; I do not know why. It is typical of Tories who run on both sides of the street at the same time.

In order to let the government know even more forcefully, it would be the responsibility of members of parliament, particularly on the opposition side, to vote against this legislation on second reading because the government has the majority. We should not be party to bailing out the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Transport because of their stubbornness and ineptness. Why should we be a party to that? If legislation accomplishes that, and it will, and brings an end to the strike, if it returns the matter of the pay package to proper collective bargaining or to the arbitration process, we will have done a good job. But why should we be party to legislation that does not do that? It will do part of it, it will get the controllers back to work, but it will not do the other essential part of making sure that the legislation is fair and that it deals honestly and in good faith with the air traffic controllers.

I urge hon. members to consider what we have to say on this, and I urge them to remember that the precedent being set here could well come back to haunt a subsequent parliament, or even a subsequent session of this parliament, because it is a precedent which we believe is unnecessary and dangerous.

This precedent could allow a subsequent government to use this as an excuse to do the same thing again, and we do not think that is the kind of precedent that should be on the law books of this country. I urge the House to get the government to accept a basic and important change in the legislation for which it will receive greater acceptance, not only from all sides of the House but from the government's own employees. The