

### *Railway Operations Act*

work. It is perfectly true that Professor Weldon was the union's appointee to the conciliation board. What he recommends, however, is substantially less than the non-operating unions demanded of the railroads. Professor Weldon recommends 10.79 per cent in the second year of the contract and 38 cents an hour in the first year of the contract, and he does so on the following grounds: 5.45 per cent of the increase represents the inflation factor. Note, this is not the inflation factor arrived at by the non-op unions or by Professor Weldon himself, but the inflation factor arrived at by the *Time* magazine board of economists, and one would hardly call them a bunch of raving radicals. We all know that inflation at its present rate will amount to 7 or 8 per cent in 1973.

Professor Weldon also recommends a further 3.34 per cent to cover productivity increases—not those related to the railways, which are in the neighbourhood of 6 per cent, but the national productivity increase which the same economists put at 3.34 per cent. Surely hon. members will agree that this is reasonable. He also recommends a further 2 per cent in each of those two years for what the trade union movement and the non-op unions in particular call a catch-up.

There is little disagreement with the claim that the non-operating unions have fallen behind those engaged in comparable industries, that their position has worsened with respect not only to workers in the manufacturing industry but with respect to their counterparts in the United States. Professor Weldon measures this discrepancy as being around 6 per cent. He carefully recommends that these workers get 2 per cent of the 6 per cent in the current year and a further 2 per cent next year. Hopefully, they will be able to negotiate the remaining 2 per cent in a future year.

Mr. Chairman, would you be good enough to ask my colleagues to soften their conversations so that you can hear me?

● (2200)

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order, please. Again, I would invite hon. members again to co-operate with the Chair, even those standing behind the curtains, by asking them to make as little noise as possible so we can hear one another, and at least so the hon. member who has the floor can hear himself and get the impression that he is being listened to.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my usual kind and soft manner I am trying to be as persuasive as possible. I would remind the hon. members for St. John's East, Moncton, that railroad town, London East, Crowfoot, St. Boniface and others who worked on this subject of transportation in committee over the last several years, of the discussions, and the information we had received long before Professor Weldon submitted his report.

Professor Weldon's recommendations are substantially less than requested by the unions, but they amount to 26 cents per hour, over two years, more than is provided in this bill. As was said earlier today, I think this is the least we can do to ensure that we legislate the end of this emergency. What is more important, I submit, is the fact that Professor Weldon's proposal is necessary to ensure

[Mr. Benjamin.]

protection to the broad public interest, and to ensure that we are being just and fair to the railway workers of the country.

This suggested award would cost the consumers of railroad services and, or, the taxpayers of this country something in the order of \$8 or \$9 per capita in each of these two years. I submit to hon. members that this is a reasonable price to pay for good and efficient rail service. More important, this is a very reasonable price to pay for the provision of fair and just treatment to these employees we all agree are so essential. That is not an unreasonable price to pay in order that we be fair, just, and properly reward these essential, trained, conscientious and efficient workers.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I wish to move a sub-amendment as follows:

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "thirty-four" and by substituting therefor the words "thirty-eight", and also by deleting all the words of the amendment after the words "thirty-four" or "thirty-eight", as the case may be, and substituting therefor the following words:

"and by deleting all the words after the word 'Part' in line 1 on page 4, and substituting therefor the words 'by 10.8 per cent effective January 1, 1974'".

The clause with the sub-amendment and the amendment would then read:

The terms and conditions of each collective agreement to which this Part applies are amended forthwith by increasing each hourly basic rate of wages in effect on December 31, 1972, as established by or pursuant to such agreement, by thirty-eight cents per hour effective January 1, 1973 and by increasing each hourly basic rate of wages in effect on December 31, 1973, as established by or pursuant to such agreement and pursuant to this Part, by 10.8 per cent effective January 1, 1974.

The remainder of that clause would be deleted.

May I close this portion of my remarks by appealing to hon. members on both sides of the House to decide that this amount is the least we can provide in order to be fair and just to railway employees while serving the broader public interest in ending this emergency situation created by the interruption of our rail services.

Nobody can suggest that this amount is unreasonable. Those on the management side of negotiations have literally agreed that this is not an unreasonable position. May I repeat, for the benefit of my hon. friends in the back corner here, that we are not interested in some kind of a bidding game and do not want this bill to fall into that situation. We have moved this sub-amendment and I can only wish that the hon. member for St. John's East had suggested these figures. We have moved the sub-amendment in a further attempt to persuade members in all parts of the House that this is a more fair and just piece of legislation than originally proposed in order to send our railway workers back to work.

If anyone can point out any unreasonableness in this proposal, or show in any way that it is excessive or inflationary, I would be glad to hear from him. I would invite the Minister of Finance to indicate how it is unreasonable, unjust or excessive.

One might expect that a union appointee to the conciliation board would bring down a higher amount than was suggested. I think the fact that he did not is further