

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Nobody knows what you are doing. You are a stupid man.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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AIR TRANSPORT

AIRPORT FIREFIGHTERS' STRIKE—POSSIBILITY OF APPOINTMENT OF MEDIATOR IF TREASURY BOARD PROPOSAL REJECTED TO AVOID WALKOUT BY PILOTS

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. It arises out of the widespread knowledge in Canada today that the airline pilots' situation could be straightened out very quickly if the minister would indicate just a little bit more clearly than he did a moment ago, in answer to my colleague, whether his contingency plan does include the utilization of a mediator during the interim period between the possible rejection of the proposal that has been offered the firefighters and the naming of an arbitrator to follow the arbitration procedure if in fact that is required. If the minister could give that indication we all know, including the Minister of Transport, that the Canadian Airline Pilots' Association would drop the matter immediately and there would not be any strike by them tonight.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, there are two possibilities before the government.

An hon. Member: To resign.

Mr. Drury: One is that the settlement agreed to by the union will be ratified, in which case we will have an agreement. The other is that the settlement agreed to by the union will be rejected, in which case we will apply for binding arbitration according to the terms of the law. During the process of waiting to set up the arbitration tribunal and the convening of it in order to undertake the case, the services of a mediator would be employed in an endeavour to resolve the differences existing between the two parties so as to make clearer and easier the work of the arbitration tribunal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Why didn't you say that the first time?

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PUBLIC SERVICE

SUGGESTED LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR SETTLEMENT OF LABOUR DISPUTES WITHOUT STRIKES

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and relates to strike problems as well but is in a much broader sense rather than in respect of a specific matter.

Oral Questions

In view of the constant and continuing unrest on the federal labour scene where so few individuals can effectively disrupt essential services in this country, some illegally, which adversely affects every Canadian, can he advise the House whether he is considering over-all legislation which would by some alternative means curb this type of damaging strike, possibly in favour of some rational and satisfactory form of arbitration prior to the fact?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, because of the noise I missed the last part of the question but I think I do have the gist of it. As the hon. member knows, it was stated a few days ago by the President of the Privy Council that we have received two of the three parts of the report which has been prepared by Mr. Finkelman. This embodies suggestions and proposals which we will study and which may lead in the direction the hon. member is suggesting.

Mr. Jelinek: In that case, will the Prime Minister advise this House if he has instructed any of his ministers, possibly the President of the Treasury Board or the Minister of Labour, to make any specific or concrete recommendations to the cabinet regarding this matter and, if not, is he now prepared to do so?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Finkelman report recommendations will, indeed, be coming to cabinet through the President of the Privy Council. I repeat that we have not received the third part of the report, but it does deal with a very important aspect of labour negotiations in the public sector. When the previous government recognized the right to strike in the Public Service as one of the options, it was quite clear in our mind and in the public mind that this would not entail any condoning of illegal strikes, and this government wants to make sure that if anything can be done to prevent illegal strikes happening or to dissuade people from embarking on them it will do so.

● (1450)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore and then the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RETAIL BEEF PRICES—ALLEGATION WESTERN CANADIANS PAYING MORE THAN EASTERNERS—ACTION TO PREVENT INCREASES

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has he investigated the allegations made yesterday by the Canadian Cattleman's Association that western consumers are paying more for beef than eastern consumers and that the retailers are to blame?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I saw the allegations in the press just before coming into the House. I certainly want to