

realizes that it is advisable to sign a collective agreement today, aware that it will make additional profits tomorrow.

I think I am well justified in claiming from the government the possibility of organizing information mechanisms at the union level. Of course, the unions of Ford or General Motors are well enough organized to have research offices. But thousands of small unions do not have enough information to be able to discuss at the same level as the company. And, of course, the unions and the workers are discriminated against.

I think it is important to ask the government for information mechanisms so that the unions be able to discuss, given equal data, at the same level as the employer. I think that the unions would then have the necessary information to ensure the future of Canadian productivity. We must ask the government to modify the consultation mechanism.

But if we were to limit ourselves to the development of a consultation mechanism ensuring the negotiation of a settlement within the time prescribed without taking the productivity into account, it would be wrong because the unions do need this information at the production level.

And the information that has been given to me on the subject allows me to believe that it would be of great help to the unions, to the employee, if they were given the same information as the employers.

I felt I had to rise in this debate and since I want to be very practical and very brief I would also like to ask the government to give particular attention to subsidies granted in respect of railway transport. I know that those subsidies are necessary. The freeze on rates was put into effect but we know that there are two means of transport in Canada, rail and trucking.

Recently the president of the Quebec Trucking Association, Mr. Archambault, made his views known to the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I have here a clipping from a newspaper which gives details on the subject:

In his letter to the Prime Minister Mr. Archambault stresses that the government must not favour a policy which boils down to "two different sets of weights." If Ottawa subsidizes the rail industry every time there is a strike or a labour dispute it will have to grant the same privilege to trucking companies when they are faced with a work stoppage or tough bargaining.

The people of Canada actually have two modes of ground transport, rail and trucking. To subsidize only one mode is to prejudice the other.

The Quebec Trucking Association is asking the federal authorities to "put an end to the exclusive privileges granted to railways." It adds that the current situation should not lead to further paternalism in that field.

So I think it is important to point out that request made by the Quebec Trucking Association. That association and its members who drive the trucks are also entitled to some security.

Of course, the government must consider the subsidies necessary to maintain the rates at their lowest level but, if it does not want to have problems in the field of trucking, it must also grant that industry subsidies allowing it to compete with railway systems.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that I had to make those comments and to be practical I say that I agree with the bill

Railway Operations Act

even though I regret that the government is forced to follow that course of action. I hope that the railway workers will understand the necessity to resume operations and that they will respect the legislation that we will adopt within a few hours.

I hope also that the bargaining process which will follow the passage of the bill will produce a satisfactory and acceptable minimum. And because we have been summoned to discuss that legislation and that apparently Parliament will sit again next week to deal with the cost of living increases, I will keep my comments for next week.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to make that brief comment with the hope that the government will pay special attention not only to a legislation calling back workers to work but that it will invite the executives at the bargaining tables and that the minister will improve some imperfections and unfairness in respect of those employees.

If hon. members show the objectivity that the population is waiting for and is requiring, I believe that the government will have taken the right step. If it has not enough motivation, it will effectively be obliged to do so. But I hope that the government will not wait for that. Through the co-operation of all members, and with the proper objectivity, we will succeed in suitably improving the lot of those workers.

[*English*]

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I regret again being here to order the railroad employees back to work. This is not the first, but the third time I have been here on such an occasion. I find this occasion even more distasteful than the others. For the past seven or eight years, and during the last two in particular, the government has shown absolutely no interest in the railroads, how they operate, their financial structure, pension plan or anything else.

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The contribution made by the government to the railroads in Canada has been the addition of a relatively small number of hopper cars to the rolling stock in western Canada and the introduction of a new ferry here and there. I am sure the government and members of the Liberal party who sit on the transport committee have concluded that the railways are not very important in the national scheme of things. Yet when the railway workers go on strike for two or three days there are cries from all parts of Canada about grain piling up, about shortages of food, about people starving.

I was very interested in the comments made by members who come from Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. I have been to both of those islands. They are very attractive. Certainly, the people who live there try to sell the idea that they are very attractive. Yet they have been raising hell because people who went to visit those islands found that their stay has been extended. I would have thought that the hospitality of the islanders was such that they would make these people welcome and enable them to pass a very pleasant stay, rather than having all this fuss.

The railroads only become frightfully important when something happens to prevent their operation. Few mem-