

Oral Questions

steps are being contemplated by the government with respect to the legal strike there?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, I can give the hon. member a quick report. It appears that a settlement is very difficult to obtain in connection with the question of job security along the lines the conciliation commissioner, Judge Gold, recommended. This is what is keeping the parties apart. I am giving it one last try to see whether that issue can be resolved. If it cannot, we shall have to consider an alternative which I know all hon. members as well as myself consider unpalatable, that is to say, legislation.

● (1410)

STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN IN QUEBEC—ALLEGED ABUSE OF LEGAL RIGHT TO PICKET AS FACTOR IN SETTLEMENT

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. The minister seems to indicate that it is the government's intention at this point in time, having given every opportunity for a settlement between the parties, to focus upon the broad issue of the Gold report. Is it not the understanding or belief of the government that the difficulties concerning this legal strike have to do with the much narrower aspect of the illegal use or abuse of the right of men on legal strike to picket? Is this not the area upon which the government should in fact be focussing its attention in so far as legislation is concerned?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the fact that there has been picketing in certain situations, then this is a matter for interpretation by the courts. If someone wants to take out an injunction against picketing, an injunction is issued and if it is disobeyed, we would have to consider very seriously taking legal action against those who disobey the law. When I say "we" I am talking of those people who take out these injunctions, and in this case, being in the private sector, government is not necessarily involved.

Mr. Forrestall: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. So that we understand the Minister of Labour, can I ask him whether he will confirm to us that the government is now giving consideration to legislation for a return to work of workers who have been on legal strike for about three weeks on the basis of the Gold report?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, without going into what the legislation will contain at this stage—I think the hon. member will understand my reservation on that score—let me say that when a strike situation does appear to be very difficult of resolution the necessity for legislation is always a consideration of the government.

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AIR CANADA

DECISION ON HOLDING INQUIRY—REQUEST FOR OUTLINE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport, who

[Mr. Forrestall.]

has finally come into the House. Has the government reached any decision as to whether or not to proceed with an inquiry into certain financial dealings of Air Canada and, if so, would the minister inform the House of the terms of reference of this inquiry?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this matter came before cabinet this morning and we have decided to have an inquiry under Part I of the Inquiries Act. We have a certain number of names of people who have been suggested by members of the cabinet and others. Before we can disclose them I think it is the decent thing to do to wait for their acceptance, and we have not received any answers yet. I think that before the end of the day we will be in a position to say exactly who will be the commissioner or the person making the inquiry, and we will be in a position—

Mr. Lawrence: What about the terms of reference?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Before publicly announcing the terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, I think I should first see a copy of them. I have the authorization of the cabinet to discuss with the judge whether he is satisfied that he has enough power to fulfil his duty as defined by cabinet.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the minister correctly, then at least by tomorrow he should be in a position to tell us what are the terms of reference?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Yes, I think so.

Mr. Broadbent: Would he at this time assure the House that the terms of reference, whatever else they may include, will be broad enough to include all the financial dealings of Air Canada?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there will be any restriction. There is one thing which is evident to all members of the House, and it is that we would like to know if there is enough financial control within this big organization, Air Canada, so that the things we think have happened will not happen again. This will be one part of the mandate, and it will not be restricted to that part of the deal referred to by the hon. member for Central Nova. I can give you this general term of reference in that after that we will want to know whether the top management acted quickly enough in this case so we are sure that the interests of the public of Canada were protected as far as this organization is concerned.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF REPORT ON MR. MÉNARD'S ACTIVITIES AND INTERNAL AUDIT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Ménard resigned as Vice-President of Air Canada last March it was reported that an internal audit was done at that time by Air Canada and that shortly thereafter an internal or in-house investigation of his work was carried out which, it was claimed, totally exonerated him of any wrong doing. Will the minister take steps to ensure that the internal audit report done by Air Canada at that time is made available to the public, and