

the government and rubberstamped by parliament. That is what is going to happen.

If we pass this legislation as it now stands, we will be establishing a dangerous precedent. We will be saying that from now on not only has parliament the right to send workers back to the job and not only has parliament the right to say the dispute shall be submitted to arbitration, but we are saying that the government can use its majority in parliament arbitrarily and arrogantly to lay down the terms and conditions upon which workers will work.

I submit that not since Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves on this North American continent have people had to work for a wage that was dictated by the employer. If the employer and the employee cannot agree, and there comes a time when the dispute has to be settled and it is to be brought to an end by parliament, the very least the workers of this country are entitled to is that the final disposition of their wages, hours and conditions will be settled by an independent body before which they can appear to plead their case. That right is being denied them under clause 5 of this piece of legislation.

I plead with this committee of the whole to pass this amendment and to do what should have been done in the first place, namely, say to the workers, "Go back to your job and we will let you take your case to an independent body." If the government is prepared to do that, we are prepared to support this legislation. If the government is not prepared to do that, this legislation is not worth the support of any person who believes in the basic principles of democracy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby has proposed an amendment to clause 5 which is the heart and guts of the collective agreement. I am supposed to be knowledgeable about the collective agreement on which I am going to be asked to vote.

Clause 5 raises several questions in my mind. For example, there is the technical language. What are the implications of the categories A11 to A18? Where do the VFR controllers, shift supervisors and unit chiefs fit into this schedule? What do the columns under the rates of A11 to A18 mean? There are nine columns and two sets of figures. What do they constitute?

This is a complicated situation on which hon. members are being asked to vote. This is not as it was in the past. It is not the kind of situation we had with regard to the railway workers. That is the purpose of the amendment by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby. In the past the contract or agreement was always sent to an independent arbitrator or body to look at the settlement. In this instance we are being asked to pass a collective agreement.

One has to assume that those who are negotiating the collective agreement have some knowledge with regard to the amounts being agreed on and the terminology. They ought to know, for example, what is meant by familiarization flights in Schedule IV. I have no idea what that means.

Air Traffic Controllers

We can see from the hour and the attitude of members that they are not the least bit interested in finding out what this means. The Minister of Labour is having a jocular time with his officials. Backbenchers on the government side are not interested in asking questions about this clause. All they are interested in is getting it over with and getting out of here. If that is the kind of collective bargaining in which members of parliament are going to participate, it is a crying shame.

The Minister of Labour likes to cast himself as the friend of labour. However, no friend of labour would set a precedent such as that contained in clause 5. He is a great one for talking about his 14 point program. He should add a fifteenth point. That ought to be that the government should never set precedents by establishing collective agreements through parliament.

Maybe the Minister of Labour ought to direct his attention to eliminating the strike program. There are a lot of other things he should do. This does not indicate that he has an attitude which is open to the trade union movement.

At this time the government is trying to cultivate its friendship with labour. At any rate that was the context of the debate which the minister and I had. He put forward the idea that labour ought to stay loose in the Canadian political scheme so that they can have some influence with the various political parties. It is obvious he has blown that façade. It is obvious that he does not speak for labour in cabinet. The Minister of Transport has taken on that job. He stated over radio and television that we should proceed in the direction of no strikes in essential services.

I want to know how much clause 5 will cost the taxpayers of Canada. How much is this agreement worth in dollars and cents, and what is the total cost of the fringe benefits?

● (2240)

Can the minister explain the meaning of the columns A11 to A18? What are "familiarization flights"? Where do VFR controllers and shift supervisors fit into the schedule? What is meant by "high density U.S.A. units"? Now that I am a bargainer, I want to know what overtime is predicted for air traffic controllers and what this is likely to cost. When I was negotiating with school boards we had to know the facts, and as a negotiator now I want to know these things. I think this is only fair ball. Can the minister explain the rates of pay set out in Schedule I? What do these nine columns of figures mean? Where does experience fit into that scheduling? I should also like an explanation—

The Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Rodriguez: Since this is his bill, I ask the minister for an explanation of this terminology. Indeed, I demand an explanation.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): With respect to the terminology the hon. member is talking about in Schedule II, each and