

Oral Questions

the employees in question? If so, when does he expect to know the result of that vote? Does he anticipate taking action to see that the designated employees carry out their obligations as designated employees and fulfil their obligations to the public?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, at the present time, the parties are holding discussions. I have no comment to make. I hope they will come to an agreement. I have no other comments to make. It is obvious that those who do not have the right to strike will have to stay on the job. Such are the terms of the collective agreement.

* * *

[English]

AIR TRANSPORT**GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT DANGER TO AIR PASSENGERS THROUGH ILLEGAL STRIKES**

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to direct a question to the Minister of Transport but I see he has left the House. I will direct it to the Acting Prime Minister. A Canadian Pacific Airlines flight on December 20 out of Amsterdam, with 130 passengers on board, was denied landing rights at Montreal because the snow clearance crews had gone on an illegal strike. The aircraft was diverted and was again denied landing rights at Toronto because of the illegal strike of snow clearance workers there. Then the aircraft was diverted to Ottawa and denied permission to land, but was finally allowed to land here after being held in a holding pattern. It was then held on the main runway for 40 minutes until the taxi strips could be cleared. As illegal strikes of ground service crews create potential dangers for passengers and aircrews, what does the minister propose to do to ensure the safety of passengers, aircrews and aircraft in such circumstances?

Mr. Cliff McIsaac (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if I may answer the question, we were in touch with CP Air this morning and I am advised that they have not heard of the particular incident to which the hon. member refers. I remind him that at the time in question, Toronto and Ottawa airports were never shut down or in a non-operating state. If the hon. member would be good enough to inform me of the flight number, date and time, we could check into the matter further.

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, I will not only tell the parliamentary secretary the flight number and the time; I will tell him the name of the pilot as well so that he can make a thorough investigation. May I ask a supplementary question—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Why not tell what you know now.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should be permitted to ask his supplementary question.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, this is not the first incident of this kind. I suggest that the minister should recommend to the Minister of Justice an amendment to the Criminal Code which would make it a criminal offence for ground crew personnel to strike illegally in circumstances where such action would affect the safety of passengers, aircrews and aircraft in flight at the time of an illegal strike. Will the minister undertake to do that; or must we wait until there is a disaster before the government acts in this regard?

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat that CP Air advised us this morning that they know nothing of the particular incident reported by the CBC. Until we either prove or disprove that the incident took place, I can only point out that the airports were operating. If the hon. member wishes to give us the details that he has, we will check with CP Air and try to determine the facts.

* * *

AIR CANADA**DISPUTE WITH FINANCE BRANCH EMPLOYEES AT WINNIPEG, MANITOBA—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Labour? In view of the assurances the minister gave to the hon. member for St. Boniface, to the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and to me on December 11 that he would intervene in the dispute of the finance branch employees of Air Canada at Winnipeg and try to resolve the differences that still existed, and in view of the fact that this dispute is still a very serious one, can he tell the House what he has done about it, what were the results of his intervention, and if he will continue to make his good offices available to settle this dispute?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have been advised that our mediation services have been working on this question. I cannot give an up to date report but I will endeavour to do so at the beginning of next week.

[Later:]

In reply to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre with respect to the finance branch situation in Winnipeg, the latest report is that Air Canada has offered to open up the agreement to discuss classification, and we are now waiting for a reply from the union.

* * *

HOUSING**PROGRAMS OF GOVERNMENT TO STIMULATE GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Given that in the last quarter of 1974 housing starts declined by 35 per cent, aggravating the unemployment situation because there were 220,000 fewer workers in the construction industry, is the minister