

SITTING RESUMED

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO
BE DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: Order. Pursuant to provisional standing order 39A it is my duty to inform the house that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment this evening are as follows:

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Sherbrooke, the National Capital Commission.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Halifax, national defence—committee consideration of integration measures.

MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY OPERATION ACT

PROVISION FOR RESUMPTION OF RAILWAY
OPERATIONS AND SETTLEMENT OF
LABOUR DISPUTE

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Pearson for the second reading of Bill No. C-230, to provide for the resumption of operations of railways and for the settlement of the existing dispute with respect to terms and conditions of employment between railway companies and their employees.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the co-operation received from all sides of the house which has enabled us to proceed with legislation which was introduced only today. As I said this afternoon, it is legislation dealing with an emergency situation. The urgent and immediate issue that faces this house and parliament at this moment is the necessity of ending a national railway strike with the least possible delay by fair and reasonable legislative provisions.

Though the long-range importance and the far-reaching implications of the failure to settle this and other disputes by negotiation and agreement over the years, through the normal processes of collective bargaining should be, and is being, considered as a matter of great significance requiring parlia-

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

mentary attention, and is something that will undoubtedly be debated—and should be debated—in this session, nevertheless at this moment these longer range matters are secondary to the necessity of an early decision by parliament on this bill which is now before the house.

It is necessary, however, in putting this bill before the house, and in explaining it, to give briefly the background of developments leading up to the situation which made parliamentary action unavoidable. That, I think, Mr. Speaker, is all the more necessary in view of certain remarks made this afternoon.

This is the fourth time since 1949 that the federal parliament has been asked to consider emergency legislation to deal with a serious strike situation. On three of these four occasions railways were involved, and on the other, in 1958, sea transportation.

Our experience over these years shows pretty conclusively that the processes of collective bargaining in railway disputes are becoming less and less effective in meeting the conditions that exist today. One reason for this—but only one reason—is the fact that present laws restrict the capacity of the railways to manage their business operations and to compete effectively with other forms of transport. The law has prevented them, for good reasons, from taking action which would increase their own revenue. This has resulted in subsidies from government which now amount to more than \$100 million a year. To correct the situation the government has introduced another bill dealing with railway matters—the railway legislation bill—which will be debated, I hope, immediately after we dispose of the one before the house.

• (8:10 p.m.)

There is an even more far reaching development which has had a bearing on the weakness, and ineffectiveness, in too many cases, of labour-management negotiations, and that is the importance of job security in the case of technological change. An increased wage has no meaning if the job disappears because of a new machine.

We must find better methods for the negotiation and settlement of disputes in the railway industry, and in other industries; new and improved mediation and conciliation procedures which will take into account new circumstances, new conditions in industrial society; which will more effectively preserve the right of the employee in these new conditions and also adequately protect the national interest, particularly in respect of essential national services.