

**Mr. Benson:** I am not embarrassed but I do not think it would in any way help negotiations at this time. At the moment offers have been made to them. They have spoken to us and there has been an agreement that the discussions would be in confidence. I, for one, intend to keep confidence while the negotiations are going on.

There are two other things to which I would like to refer. After this morning's meeting, I believe there is some hope of getting together and solving this particular problem without the necessity for legislation. I, for one, certainly hope this will be the case. This morning I explained quite fully to the three associations the position of the government, that we as a government cannot afford to have the air lines in Canada closed down.

We have to have every concern for the employees of the government of Canada, but our overriding concern must be for the people of Canada. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, in negotiations, and in looking at Judge Robinson's report to decide what we could accept, the amounts we could accept, we have had the interests of the people of Canada in mind. One must always remember that in making settlements with a particular group in the civil service one does not settle with one group in isolation. Any settlement in the civil service means an adjustment of the structure; it means that the supervisors are going to get more money also. Hon. members may recall when we settled the postal strike over a year ago that I said it would probably cost us over \$100 million within a year, and it has. This is because there is a ripple effect. What we are trying to arrive at is a fair and just wage for the air traffic controllers, considering their particularly difficult job and comparing them with the people they want to be compared with, namely, air line despatchers.

There is just one other thing I would like to say with respect to the appointment of Judge Robinson, although there is not any great point in arguing as to whether or not he was asked to report on salaries. Whether he was asked to or not, he did. In our opinion he was not asked to; in his opinion he was, and he has reported and made recommendations on salaries.

I have already told hon. members the point where we disagree with his analysis in regard to the comparison with air line despatchers. However, I should point out the difference between Judge Robinson and a mediator or an arbitrator.

#### *Air Traffic Control Dispute*

We, as a government, felt that something should be done for air traffic controllers, probably because of the particular circumstances of their job since there is a great deal of stress involved in carrying out the tasks they have to carry out. For example, if an air traffic controller starts to lose his hearing, or something like that, he can no longer have that kind of job. This is the basic reason that we asked Judge Robinson to operate as a commissioner.

At this point I must remind hon. members that the salary rates had been determined by treasury board and the government, as the law presently provides, as of July 1, 1965, with another adjustment on July 1, 1966. The pay question, for all intents and purposes, was closed. The air traffic controllers had argued that they deserved special consideration because of the stress and tension under which they must operate. I would be the first to admit that it is a very difficult job, and our sole purpose in appointing a commissioner of inquiry was to look into the working conditions to determine if there should be variation due to the particular stress of the job.

If we had been appointing a mediator, such as we did in the postal dispute, all parties to the dispute would have been asked to agree on who should be appointed. In the first postal dispute Judge Anderson acted as the mediator, and it was agreed that neither party would be bound by the results of his determinations. In the recent postal dispute we had the good offices of Mr. Justice Montpetit as mediator. In both these cases all the parties agreed to the appointments and agreed that neither party would be bound to accept anything the mediator recommended.

In the case of Mr. Justice Montpetit he was able to come up with a recommendation that was acceptable to both parties, and both parties accepted it. But in the present instance we, as the government appointed Judge Robinson to carry out an inquiry for us. Whether he went beyond his terms of reference is not really worthy of too much debate, because actually his report is here, and what is in it; is in it. I simply say we are not willing to accept the report completely because we believe there is some fallacy in the basis of computation of amounts involved. But we do accept the principle that man for man, with equivalent service, there should be a reasonable equality of pay between air despatchers and air traffic controllers.

I do not really think that there is anything I can add beyond that point, Mr. Speaker. I