

Adjournment Motion

Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this government has always asserted the primacy of the public interest in labour disputes and has never pretended that labour disputes are matters which affect exclusively the parties. One cannot, in a particular case, make law on the spot. If we are to have a system in which the public interest is continuously involved to a greater extent, obviously that system must be built up in advance of any particular dispute. Quotations which refer to particular disputes in advance of the establishment of the general policy are not to be taken as indications of the government's over-all attitude. Obviously, if we succeed in the initiatives which the minister is now proposing, there will be a difference in techniques but no change in the general philosophy of the government. However, there may be a more effective way to bring about industrial peace.

I assume that when the hon. member referred on Friday to the recent meetings with labour representatives he was referring to the meeting held on January 22 with the officers and general vice presidents of the Canadian Labour Congress. At that meeting it was agreed between the government and the labour representatives that those discussions were confidential and that participants would limit themselves to saying that the government and labour

had met and would meet again, and that there had been no precise agreement or undertaking beyond that.

The meeting on January 22 was part of the on-going consultations in relation to inflation, and a formal structure for on-going discussions between labour and management was not the subject of that meeting, although some passing reference was made to it.

I can advise the House that informal discussions have been held with representatives of labour and with the representatives of management, and both sides have expressed considerable interest in the minister's proposal to establish the Canada labour relations council, the purpose of which will be to find, on a continuing basis, solutions to difficult problems of practice and perception in labour relations.

As was indicated on Friday, the government has not yet taken a decision on the substance of the minister's proposal, but I can say that the minister is greatly encouraged by the positive response of both labour and management to the proposal. Considerable work has been done in the department and we look forward to making those details public at an appropriate time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.