

the constitution to maintain this service. The onus is on members opposite to demonstrate that this right can be protected without removing the right to strike. Obviously that cannot be done.

In 1967 the parliament of this nation introduced, as a permanent feature for the federal employees of this country, the right to strike. Those involved in this ferry service are federal employees. Therefore, any motion to secure continuous and uninterrupted service from employees engaged in this kind of activity must of necessity remove their right to strike. Whether members opposite like it or not, that is the consequence of this motion. It is as clear as the light of day.

An hon. Member: That is your opinion.

Mr. Caccia: Of course, that is my opinion. Any member of this chamber is entitled to express his opinion. That is not unusual. Perhaps we will hear a better opinion from members opposite. However, up until this time we have heard the opinion of two speakers and they were of no particular consequence to this motion.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Caccia: I can see from the interjections that members opposite do not like that. Obviously I am touching a raw nerve. They do not like to see it brought to the surface that underneath all their declarations of policy they do not support the idea of the right to strike in the public service. That is the essence of this motion.

Mr. McGrath: Get some more notes from Joe Guay.

Mr. Caccia: I do not need more notes from the parliamentary secretary. He has been very helpful in providing me with notes.

● (1750)

The opposition cannot be criticized for lack of consistency. Two members from Newfoundland have put forward motions which are clearly consistent in economic terms. Last week the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Carter), I believe, was advocating a reduction in rates applicable to freight and passenger cars using the ferry service to Newfoundland.

Mr. Marshall: What cars?

Mr. Caccia: Read the motion. It is motion No. 4.

Mr. Marshall: What passenger cars? You took them away.

Mr. Caccia: Today the hon. member for Humber-St. George's- St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) advocated a system whereby people engaged in those services would not be able to strike as are others under federal jurisdiction. This is one way to economize, expressed by the hon. member who spoke today, in order to achieve the objectives of the hon. member who spoke a week or so ago in favour of reducing freight rates. Obviously if you refuse the right to strike, wages and salaries will not be as high and costs will be reduced correspondingly—unless of course, the workers affected choose to take part in illegal strikes, a

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situation which usually leads to chaos. That is the essence of the motion as far as I can judge.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, it is a shameful and shocking thing that when an hon. member from Newfoundland makes an appeal based on the constitutional rights of his province for an improved transportation service he should be greeted by the subtle and slimy sinuosity of those who suggest he is calling for strike breaking legislation. There have been many appeals from my province, and from Newfoundland, for better transportation, but this is the first time there has been such lack of concern as to preclude even an expression of sympathy for the people down there.

The motion is properly phrased for it is in almost exactly the terms as those signed by Prince Edward Island. Let the hon. member sneer at that. We are dealing here with a constitutional right, one which it is my hon. friend's job to defend. I am appalled that supporters of the government on the backbenches are in such a state that they cannot deal with transportation without getting into strike breaking. When we want to talk about the transport system we shall do so. We shall make our plans known. We support the legalized trade unions of this country. In this we do not take a backseat to anybody.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I say it is shameful if they can give no other message to the people of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland than to tell them we cannot cure our transportation ills or improve our situation without strike breaking. The minister is right. Transportation is in a mess, and hon. members opposite have been talking to him for so long that their thinking is equally messy.

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I fail to see how the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) can interpret anything said by members on this side as indicating that opposition speakers have put forward anti-labour views. The speeches made from this side simply draw attention to the difficulty which arises from the motion before us.

Everyone agrees there is a constitutional obligation here. No one denies that Newfoundland has as much right as any other part of Canada to enjoy satisfactory communication with the rest of the country. No one denies there is a need for adequate transportation. But it must also be recognized that a solution cannot be reached simply by passing legislation along the lines suggested. The solution has to be an acceptable one, one which will rule out possible interruptions of the service in the future. We cannot force upon those who are operating the ships from the island to the mainland a solution which would mean removing from them the right to the process of free collective bargaining. However, there is no doubt that within the present framework a solution has to be found.

We on this side are objecting to the misleading information given by speakers on the other side of the House—implications that the government has been doing nothing about this problem. That is absolute balderdash.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!