

They took steps to try to find a way to put the Vancouver airport back into partial service, and they were partially successful. But there are nine other airports. What happens tomorrow, if these men who were sent out by the minister do not have the authority to make any commitment on behalf of this government and do not find a way for the expression of the views of these people on what they believe is a legitimate grievance? There is no way, in my view, that this House has any business adjourning tomorrow while we are faced with a situation in which one of the provinces of Canada is isolated because it has no air transportation, knowing that communities within that province are unable to communicate with each other because of lack of air transportation services.

Can you imagine the situation in which hon. members of this House pack up and leave for a holiday tomorrow, leaving unsettled this problem in my province and leaving a serious problem for other parts of the country in the event the situation in British Columbia is not settled?

On August 31 the former minister of labour said, as reported at page 6117 of *Hansard*:

I want to point out, as an observer, that we have under federal jurisdiction the finest Department of Labour in the eleven jurisdictions of this country.

One must ask why the Department of Labour has not become involved in this extremely difficult situation, and why it has left it to the Minister of Transport alone to resolve the entreaties, the opposition and the complexity of the situation in which the minister must find himself.

**An hon. Member:** Bring back Mackasey.

**Mr. Fraser:** Surely tonight all of us can agree that an essential first step to be taken is that the minister take with him senior representatives of Treasury Board and members of the executive of the Public Service Alliance to meet with these men in an attempt, within a very short period of time, to work out a formula which will be accepted as fair and under which they can put forward their points of view. I feel if this were done immediately we would stand some chance of restoring air transportation in my province rapidly, with a minimum of damage to the lives of those unfortunate people who have taken a route of which I do not personally approve, and also with a minimum of dislocation to the country at large.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in the very few moments available to me to make my contribution to the debate on the very difficult labour problem in British Columbia as a result of the firefighters walkout at airports in that province. I further stand in my place to compliment the gentle and responsible member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) for putting forward this motion under Standing Order 26 which initiated the debate this evening. With the greatest personal regard for the hon. member for Vancouver South, I wish to compliment him heartily as one member of the Conservative Party with enough guts and enough responsibility to disagree with his leader and his party colleagues in demanding wage and price controls, especially the 90-day freeze about which we have heard so much in the last day or two.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down; you've lost your marbles.

### *Airline Firefighters Strike*

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rose:** I hear some hon. members calling at me, using obscene adjectives. I am moved therefore to ask in all humility, as friends of organized labour, especially highlighted by recent private bills and the calling out of Canadian forces, the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle), who was himself the tank-commander, how the Conservative posture this evening could be reconciled if in fact his party were in government today? Would their attitude be expressed identically to the way so ably expressed by the hon. member for Vancouver South tonight, or would it be somewhat different?

Putting aside all further partisan comments, Mr. Speaker, this matter of relating the national rates of Canada to affluent areas such as British Columbia is an extremely thorny problem. It is fine to say, as I have said in the past, that it is stupid to spend billions of dollars through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, with which the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) has had a good deal to do, to reduce regional disparity on the one hand, and then opt for regional rates on the other which lock in the workers of Quebec and the Atlantic provinces with lower rates for their labour for the same kind of vocation. National rates may provide an example of great logic, but cut no ice at all in British Columbia. I suggest that if regional rates are appropriate for the public service, the regional rates should also apply equally to old age pensions, family allowances and even the salaries of MPs.

But saying this, Mr. Speaker, I think begs the essential question: why, in all justice, should a fireman, a stationary engineer, an aircraft controller, and their families working in the province of British Columbia be perpetually condemned to a lower standard of living than that enjoyed by their provincial or municipal counterparts if federal employees are doing exactly the same type of job? Many are now receiving \$150 to \$200 less per month. That is a serious problem that has confronted me many, many times in discussions with federal public servants.

We debate here tonight because Vancouver airport firefighters are being paid \$3,000 or \$4,000 less than municipal Vancouver firefighters. We know also that the stationary engineer working at the federal penitentiary in New Westminster is being similarly disadvantaged as compared to his counterpart working at the Okalla provincial jail. The story is the same with prison guards and clerical workers. Hon. members will recall that last August the same kind of refusal attitude was evidenced in respect of the position of the British Columbia railway workers during the national rail strike and the reluctance of B.C. rail workers to go back to work.

I suppose what I am saying essentially is that the problem we are having in respect of Vancouver Airport firefighters is merely the tip of the iceberg of widespread public service discontent in the province of British Columbia with the prevailing national public service rate structure.

**An hon. Member:** And elsewhere.

**Mr. Rose:** Someone suggests elsewhere, but I see that the member comes from Ottawa so I will discount what he said. All of us here tonight want the men to go back to