

*Air Traffic Control Dispute*

not accept, as a ground for rejecting the motion, such an irrelevant reason, because what we may say in the course of discussion is a matter for judgment in parliament and by members of parliament. In that matter we cannot be precluded by the Minister of Transport, or any other hon. member opposing the motion, from exercising our right to discuss it.

The right to discuss it cannot be questioned. We ourselves have the responsibility of determining what we say. I submit to you, sir, that neither of the hon. gentlemen has done anything but question the very basis of democratic parliamentary government itself, that is, the right to discuss, and they have not said anything relevant to the question of urgency of debate.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Fulton:** Yes.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Is it not a question of timing of debate, rather than one of urgency? Is it not the choice between urgency of debate at this moment as against urgency of debate tomorrow or some other date?

**Mr. Fulton:** Mr. Speaker, I merely wish to say that in my view the Minister of Labour has demonstrated clearly by this question the whole unfortunate proclivity of the government to put off, and put off, and put off—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Fulton:**—until the matter is not only urgent but is one of practically insoluble crisis. That is their whole objection to this motion, and that is why the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) has so wisely brought the matter up today, while it is not so urgent and not an insoluble crisis. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the urgency of discussing this matter than the question put by the minister.

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to support the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr), and I agree with the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) in saying there is no question but that this is a matter of urgent public importance. The only question that seems to be involved is that of urgency of debate. The whole thing can be put in a few words, that what the government wants to do now is procrastinate and delay a little longer.

23033—699

Ministers of the government say the judge was appointed only as a conciliator and not as a mediator, and that therefore they cannot accept his recommendations. But I wish to point out that the judge was appointed by the government. The employees have accepted his recommendations but the employer, the government, has not. The government appointed this man. It got his report and now it will not accept the recommendations made by the judge.

What the Social Credit want to do, and what the Ralliement Cr ditiste want to do, is wait until a strike is on, wait until we feel the effects of the procrastination by the government. As I have pointed out on several occasions, the government knows it has 12 separate groups in Air Canada. It has its own employees. During the past year there have been strikes continually in essential industries. It has been a year of strikes and the government has done nothing about them. If ever there was urgency of debate, if ever there was a national crisis that should be debated, I submit, Mr. Speaker, now is the hour. Now is the hour to strike in debate, and settle something the government is unable to handle.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief word to contribute to this discussion. Not only do I agree with the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) that the argument advanced by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) and by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) is irrelevant to the question of urgency of debate, but I would also point out that a recent experience denies the validity of this argument.

On Friday, December 2, we had a debate in this house under standing order 26 on what was then a very serious labour-management situation on the west coast. Negotiations to try to settle the west coast disruption, were under way at that time. It was at a critical point, yet it did not interfere with the settlement of that dispute for us to debate the matter in the house. As a matter of fact, five days later the dispute was settled.

I suggest that in this case it is even more important to have a discussion in the house because in this case the employer is the government, sitting here in parliament among us on the floor of this house. I submit, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that it is irrelevant for the Minister of Transport to give us his judgment as to whether or not it would be a good idea to have a debate. It is our democratic right;