

The commission might recommend such a thing as a statutory strike during which nobody gets paid but everybody works for a time and profits and incomes are set aside awaiting the outcome. It might even recommend compulsory arbitration. But the commission would be on top of the dispute from the very outset. When the rail dispute started and bargaining commenced back in November a public interest disputes commission would have been there. It would have been down at the table and representing the public interest. Because there is a public interest. We cannot go on having rail strikes. We cannot go on having air controllers strikes. We cannot have our harbours and canals tied up. This nation depends on these methods of transportation, communication and service.

● (2220)

The trouble with the strike weapon and the lock-out weapon is that they are the old trial by battle. We abandoned trial by battle in the judicial process a long time ago. We abandoned it probably because as a nation we got tired of looking after the widows and orphans who did not quite make it in battle. We must have a government that has leadership and that will develop a method of solving these kinds of disputes. This nation cannot afford this kind of activity any longer. It cannot afford to have its whole economy held to ransom.

The government has now had the proposals of the Woods Commission for five years. I do not say, and this party does not say, that those proposals are the last word. But my leader has said on several occasions, as have other hon. members of this House, that the Woods Commission is a start. It is a suggestion. It is something on which to base some legislation.

What have we got from across this chamber? We have got nothing—no leadership, no desire, no belief in how to solve the problem. That is the kind of government this nation has put up with. This nation cannot afford the kind of answers such as that given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to me on August 30, when he said, "Mr. Speaker, I have no announcement to make in that regard today". I had asked him would he introduce legislation that would make it no longer necessary for this House to be recalled in the fashion that it was recalled. He could not even be bothered to answer. That is the leadership this nation has had in labour relations. This has to stop. We are entitled to a government that is prepared to govern.

**Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, the working and union people of Canada are in the wrong profession. If they were doctors, lawyers, dentists, wholesalers, retailers, etc. there would be no need to strike or even negotiate. They would simply raise their wages and prices, and the public would pay. Like the hon. member, maybe we should belong to a closed shop group, the lawyers.

The public interest disputes commission, if the recommendation were implemented, would be composed of three men appointed to serve on a part-time basis. The commission would be independent of parliament, of the executive, or of any government department, and would report to the

### *Adjournment Debate*

Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). The commission would be composed of public members only, without representative character.

They would be selected in consultation with a Canadian industrial relations council, another of the bodies recommended by the task force, which is to be a representative body. The commission would have a small full-time secretariat of high calibre and have access to the Department of Labour and other sources of assistance.

The two major functions of the commission would be, first, to determine special procedures for resolving industrial disputes in industries that are likely to jeopardize the public interest, and second, to deal in an advisory way with actual disputes threatening the public interest. Parties in federal industries would negotiate their own procedures, but on failure to agree, or if the procedure was deemed inadequate, the commission would prescribe a procedure of a limited nature that would not lead to finality by way of compulsory arbitration, or control, or seizure of the operation, or other extreme measures.

The present system of disputes settlement, as contained in the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, prescribes a common procedure for the settlement of all disputes arising in the federal jurisdiction. The parties negotiate and, failing a settlement, they can apply for a conciliation officer or a conciliation board. If an officer is appointed and does not settle the dispute, a board is appointed if the dispute is of a critical public interest nature. Not many boards are required, an average of 25 per year being used over the past eight years. Where no settlement results, further mediation efforts before strike are made by the department. The parties are free to go on strike or lock-out seven days after the board of conciliation report is received by the minister, not when the agreement expires as recommended by the task force. Under this system disputes are settled and screened out in direct order of difficulty in successive stages of negotiation, conciliation and mediation. Very few disputes go through all stages.

The existing system for dealing with disputes in the federal jurisdiction is successful in getting settlements in 95 per cent of disputes, with an average of six strikes per year and with only six disputes having to be placed before parliament for legislation in the past 30 years.

The question must be asked whether the scheme recommended by the task force can be even this successful in view of its many imponderables. Will an elaborate and involved system, in which the government will operate under a gun held by a commission and in which a Minister of Labour will have no authority, serve any effective purpose? In federal jurisdiction there has been an average of only 115 disputes per year in the past eight relatively busy years, and this seems an insignificant caseload for the research-oriented scheme conceived by the members of the task force. While they may be true to their calling and their academic background, labour and management disputants are more realistic in approach and outlook.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.