

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

AIR TRANSPORT

POSSIBLE STRIKE OF TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the proposed termination of all air transport services in Canada as a result of the impending strike of the air traffic controllers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the urgency of the subject and of the debate are too apparent for me to need to elaborate or emphasize.

Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition has given the Chair the notice required under the Standing Order and since then I have given extensive and most serious consideration to the advisability of making a positive, affirmative response to the proposition of the Leader of the Opposition. I should say that I am disposed to grant the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. The difficulty I have is to determine when the debate should be had.

As hon. members know, there is a discretion left to the Chair in determining when the debate should be had, and there are a number of considerations that have to be taken into account by the Chair in making such a determination. I, of course, have to take into account first and foremost the very substance of the matter raised by the member who has proposed the motion, and it is obvious that the matter is one of such urgency that it should be debated at the first opportunity. At the same time, I gather that when the subject matter of the debate relates to negotiations which are still pending there may be factors which would militate in favour of having a slight postponement of the debate itself, subject to the decision of the Chair. The Chair must also take into consideration the legislative program which is before the House when such motions are made.

Without setting a precedent I would like to suggest, after much thought, that perhaps the time to have this debate would be this afternoon, possibly at five o'clock, but I would not like to make a ruling to this effect without

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hearing from the House Leaders 30 brief words as to what their thoughts are on the subject, after which I will make a definite ruling as to when the debate should be had. My suggestion is that it should be at five o'clock this afternoon. After having heard the House Leaders for one moment, I will make a ruling.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am advised by my colleagues, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), that negotiations are still under way at the present time between the representatives of the government and the representatives of the union. From that I think it would be obvious that not only would a debate perhaps not be useful this afternoon at five o'clock about a subject that is still under negotiation but, indeed, that a debate at this time could adversely affect the favourable outcome of the negotiations.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I do not know whether that is the intent of the hon. member. On that basis I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps it would be more appropriate if you could exercise your discretion under Standing Order 26(9) and set the debate for tomorrow evening at 8 p.m.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, unless there is a capacity on the part of the government at this time or later this afternoon to assure the House that the very important negotiations now proceeding have got to the stage where a debate at this time would not prevent a settlement of the strike from taking place, it is our view that a solid and determined statement proceeding from this House through a debate at this time might well have the effect of bringing to a conclusion the threat of this strike which is potentially so dangerous and would have such a drastic effect upon the people of Canada.

• (2:20 p.m.)

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, obviously there are considerations both ways with respect to this matter. But it seems to me that in view of what the Government House Leader has said we are in the position that unless there are some negotiations it is impossible to hold the debate at five o'clock because I gather it would require unanimous consent.