

*Legislation Respecting Railway Matters*

**Miss LaMarsh:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the right hon. gentleman would not want to leave on the record anything which was incorrect. I think he should know that that story was at once denied from Australia. It did not appear there, although my speech was made in front of all the members of the press gallery in that country. It was denied to the only representative of the press of Canada who got in touch with me in Australia, and I understand a retraction appeared the next day.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The hon. lady says that the story was denied and the retraction appeared the next day. I would ask that she table the retraction.

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

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I should very much like to see it, because that retraction certainly did not receive the prominence that her statement, which was published not only in Canada but in the United Kingdom, did.

**Miss LaMarsh:** They never do.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** There has been failure to take action and failure to realize that action was necessary. There has been failure to act, lethargy, uncertainty, division in the cabinet—and I could deal with that at some length.

**Mr. Pearson:** Well, you are an expert on it.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Some members over there even left, and I understand there are others who feel like doing so.

**Mr. Robichaud:** That is not so.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I will not mention the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Robichaud) because I understand he may be going to a higher place. The very smile on his face indicates that he is shortly to be elevated to that place from whose bourn no one has yet returned.

Returning once more to the facts, I point out that all through the weeks from July 15 on the government was warned that there would be a strike. On July 15 *The Canadian Transportation* magazine had this to say:

● (3:30 p.m.)

Parliament soon to adjourn—

It will take at least four or five days to bring the wandering M.P.'s back from their summer cottages and hideouts, and perhaps another two or three days to pass the required legislation. That means the strike will last from five days to a week.

It could conceivably last longer, of course, if the non-op unions decide to defy the legislation. The

[Mr. Woolliams.]

government doesn't think they will. The consensus of the Pearson cabinet is that the week or so on the picket lines will take most of the steam out of the militants among the railway employees, and that they will be more than ready to heed the back-to-work legislation.

We got no action, only postponement. Then the government produced the bill that was placed before us yesterday. I have not heard of anyone affected by it who gives it even tacit approval. We want the strike to end. We want the government to take effective action that will be fair and equitable. Indeed, the matter was summed up in an editorial in the *Toronto Daily Star* of August 27 which reads as follows:

The strike which now grips the nation's railways was first invited by the Pearson government, which then acted too late to prevent it.

Ottawa invited the railway crisis in June when it approved wage and benefit increases of more than 30 per cent to settle the Quebec longshoremen's strike and the seaway workers' claims.

It took until yesterday for the Prime Minister to deny this. The editorial continues:

If the railwaymen defied Parliament on such a settlement, they would forfeit their claim to public sympathy.

The settlement being one that is fair and just.

We must trust that, if parliament deals justly with them, they will react sensibly.

I intend to say something about that, something that should have been said by the Prime Minister himself. When he spoke last evening to the Canadian people he should have said something on the subject that above all else is of prime importance at this time.

My life was at the bar. The rule of law must be maintained or our democracy will cease. At this time more than any other the Prime Minister should have told the people of Canada when he spoke yesterday that a breakdown of law and order is taking place. The philosophy is being supported that laws deserving to be broken can be broken, that laws with which individuals disagree can be evaded by direct or indirect action. If we ever accept that proposition, our democracy is gone.

There is a growing problem of disrespect for the law. When parliament has a bill before it such as this, it must be scrupulously careful that the legislation is not of so coercive a nature as to arouse antagonism and worse. The law must have the support of the people as a whole. That is so in regard to matters affecting each of us personally.