

treated with the contempt that it deserves in relation to public negotiations.

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to say anything in this debate.

Some hon. Members: hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: In all seriousness, I did not intend to participate in this debate. However, having heard the arguments, I felt that members of parliament were participating with the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. We were told that there are 55,000 Canadian people sitting in airports waiting to be transported and, somehow or other, we must take this legislation that has been presented and whip it through all stages in the space of 24 hours. That is an insult to any intelligent member of parliament.

Mr. Jarvis: You are insulted easily.

Mr. Rodriguez: I know the Tories do not get insulted easily. They get up and say that they disagree with the government, but they will vote for the legislation. They should be ashamed of themselves.

I intend to say a few words even though it will take a little longer to get to report stage. In any event the bill will move through report stage so quickly it will make your head spin.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Just watch the show.

I said to myself that we should take our time and look at the legislation properly, so I want to say a few words about the whole process.

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An hon. Member: Get it over with, then.

Mr. Rodriguez: First, let me say I am really impressed by the speed with which the government has moved. I am impressed by the speed with which it has moved in the face of the impending strike of the air traffic controllers. You know, Mr. Speaker, I wish it had moved with equal speed last June when the controllers went on a wildcat strike, when they broke the law, when they broke their contract and for ten days held the air travellers of Canada to ransom. But we heard not a peep out of the Tories then, and there was no move by the government. This puts their integrity into question. I suspect the government was playing on the racism which it thinks is present in the minds of the Canadian population. It did not move quickly then to save Canadian air travellers from the inconvenience caused by that strike. This is why I do not think it is incumbent upon me to expedite this legislation and help the government out of the mess in which it finds itself.

We are talking about a legal strike, a strike which has closed down the airports and kept the planes out of the skies, except, of course, for the military aircraft which brought us all here. I would remind hon. members, though, that the air traffic controllers had called for a rotating strike. Under that

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arrangement passengers would at least have been moved; it would not have been necessary to bus them to New York, Buffalo or anywhere else. I accuse the government of precipitating the air traffic controllers strike. And, having done that, it makes the workers the scapegoats for its mistakes. It does this consistently. That is one point I wish to make and it is directed to the whole question of the government's integrity.

An hon. Member: Oh, come on!

Mr. Rodriguez: If you don't watch your step we shall be here much longer than tonight. My second point is this: I have been here since 1972 and this bill is very different from the others with which members of the school of 1972 have had to deal in terms of sending strikers back to work. For example, I recall the bill ending the rail strike. The measure before us amounts to the imposition of a collective agreement upon a group of workers and it is the first time this has been done since I have been around here. I understand it is the first time that this has ever happened, the first time members of parliament have participated in collective bargaining with government employees. The precedent is a very strong one.

I cannot help recalling the debate which took place here in 1973 when parliament sent the railway workers back to work. I want to refer specifically to a comment made at that time by the then minister of transport, Jean Marchand. In the course of that debate he made an emotional speech during which he said:

How is the level of wages established? Is it in accordance with a certain rule of justice? No. It is according to the strength of each party.

He went on to ask:

How are we as members of the House to say what the settlement should be? We cannot say that. The only reason we are here is because there is a national emergency and the only thing we can deal with is that emergency, not the dispute between the parties.

These sentiments are important because they were repeated later in the debate by the present Minister of Labour. He said then—he has changed his mind since:

If we start negotiating on the floor of this House and make our own subjective judgments instead of leaving it to the other process, the worker may decide he can get a better deal from the parliamentarians... why then should he go through the conciliation process?

This is the precedent we have all come to accept as members of parliament, namely, that we cannot participate in the actual negotiating which takes place between the worker and the employer. That is not our responsibility, and in this case the government has reneged on its duty and placed it upon members of parliament who never participated in the face to face negotiations with the workers involved. This being the case, I do not think that I, or anyone in my party, should be concerned with this finagling with the collective bargaining process, especially bearing in mind the precedent the government is setting in this particular bill.

I also heard some shameful statements from government spokesmen. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) said the government could not send to the AIB anything which was obviously in excess of the guidelines. Mr.