

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

by this move would not be either unemployed or forced to take work at lower wages than they had received under Air Canada? If I may interrupt myself, Mr. Speaker, I see that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) has now arrived. I am sure he knows what I am talking about, and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development can now relax. The then minister of transport, in reply to my question, said that he had tried to get information about this matter out of Air Canada, but he reminded me that at that date a strike was in progress and therefore Air Canada was busy. I put this supplementary question to him:

● (10:00 p.m.)

Is the minister not aware that I asked what steps the government was taking? Will he not answer that question now?

The member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) replied that:

The government indicated that it wanted fair treatment at the time the direction was given to Air Canada in the first place.

I tried another supplementary question:

Is the minister not aware that the government not only said that it wanted fair treatment, but that it assured fair treatment in this matter? I ask what has been done to keep this commitment?

At that point Mr. Speaker said it was becoming a debate, and I said, "Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker" I think somebody said, "Sock it to him", but that did not get on to *Hansard*.

I am glad to see the new Minister of Transport here tonight. I recognize he has come into this part of his job late in the game, but even though he has come late into the picture he knows the long story about the Air Canada base at Winnipeg and the unhappiness that has developed over it. Even on the minister's side of the house there are members like the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Osler) who still are not satisfied with the fact that the base has been moved from Winnipeg to Montreal. However, this is a *fait accompli* that we have to deal with, but it does seem to me that the employees have a right to expect that the commitments made by the government will be kept.

Those commitments, as I understood them, were that there would not be any loss of wages and the employees would not lose pension rights or suffer in any way because of the transfer. But there is a great deal of uncertainty at Winnipeg over this matter. There has been no assurance from Northwest Industries that the same rates of pay will be given

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

to these men as Air Canada has been paying them. There is also the fact that under Air Canada they came under federal labour jurisdiction, but under Northwest Industries they will come under provincial jurisdiction, and there are questions about their collective agreements, their pension plans and all the rest of it.

I have pretty well used up my seven minutes getting the picture before the minister, but I am sure he is aware of it. I am really more concerned in hearing from him than speaking about the matter in any detail tonight. What is he, as the new Minister of Transport, doing to make sure that the commitments made to these employees in relation to this transfer, commitments made by the government, not just by Air Canada, are being kept?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that I am fully aware of the concern he has for the workers involved in this transfer of responsibilities at Winnipeg, and secondly that I do share and sympathize with his concern in this matter. I am informed that negotiations will begin on June 10 between Air Canada and the organization concerned, which I believe is the International Association of Machinists, with regard to this whole question and the uncertainty which prevails in that area.

There is no question in my mind, nor do I believe there is in the mind of the government, that these workers who have been displaced or changed in their form of employment or in their employer, through no fault of their own, are entitled to fair and reasonable treatment, and that includes the things to which the hon. member has referred. The question now arises at to whether or not we can wait until we see the outcome of the discussions and the negotiations which will take place between Air Canada and the machinists, to determine whether or not this will result in an amicable and satisfactory settlement for all concerned.

The information that I have is that first of all there is no lack of alternative employment; that there are sufficient jobs, and that indeed the rate of growth in the area in this field is sufficient to take care of any who may wish to remain in Winnipeg, as I gather a good many of them do, to take the alternative employment that is offered. Secondly, there is a commitment, as I understand it, on the part