

Air Traffic Controllers

Some hon. Members: Question.

● (2200)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No members having risen, I declare the motion carried.

The House will now resume in committee of the whole for the consideration of the bill.

House again in committee of the whole, Mr. Laniel in the chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: When the committee interrupted its proceedings, it was studying Clause 5.

[*English*]

Shall the amendment moved by the hon. member for Vancouver South carry?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak in support of the amendment before the committee. I hope that we can have a minimum of procedural hassles and deal with the substance of the issue which is embedded in the hon. member's amendment. The point at stake here is not whether X amendment or Y amendment passes or fails. One hopes that the substance that the opposition parties want to have in this measure carries in the House.

In supporting the amendment I want to indicate the reasons why we do so.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if you can get some order on the government side in this rather important debate.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: This afternoon we heard a serious speech by the President of the Treasury Board in which he tried to come to grips with the argument that the point made in CATCA's proposal that reclassification, which is embedded in this bill and in the agreement, should not be a consideration for a further increase in salary. I would like to deal with that argument and deal in point form with the issues that the President of the Treasury Board raised, because in my view the argument raised by the President of the Treasury Board—and specifically the conclusion that he drew—is a false conclusion, and since that is central to the whole dispute between CATCA and the Treasury Board, it is central to the decision that we will reach here in discussing the legislation today, and it is the point to which the amendment that we are now considering hopes to provide a solution.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

The issue is whether or not the reclassification of the members of CATCA should entitle them to a legitimate understanding that the AIB would accept their reclassification as warranting an extra 4 per cent or 5 per cent in income. I would like to put on the record the following considerations in support of their claim, which is all that is required for submission to the AIB, and it is that precisely which the government has denied.

During the period from June 6, 1975, to January 13, 1976, there were no fewer than six letters exchanged between the Department of Transport and CATCA concerning reclassification. Earlier this afternoon the minister selected two of these letters and had them tabled. I submit that if one wants to look at all six letters, what one will find in that exchange of correspondence between the union and the Department of Transport is an agreement that the issue of reclassification is of fundamental importance and should be a matter of continuing negotiation between the government and the union.

I want to make the case beyond that, but for our purpose I think it is sufficient to have a reading of those six letters to agree—the President of the Treasury Board would agree with that conclusion if he were here—that there was acceptance on both sides that reclassification, which has not been done in that industry since 1966, was a matter of serious concern leading to the present negotiation. That is the first point.

The second point is perhaps of even greater importance to the acceptance of the idea that reclassification is central to the dispute, and that is that the government, in the contract that it has been willing to sign with CATCA, has indicated not only a willingness to accept 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 40 per cent of the reclassification areas but has indicated it will accept 100 per cent. There has been agreement between the union and the government on 100 per cent of the cases involving reclassification which, I submit, has come about precisely because there was agreement going back some years before the controls system came into being on the need for such reclassification.

The third point I would add is that the government's own additional acceptance, repeated by Treasury Board officials, repeated by some ministers, if my memory serves me correctly, and indeed repeated at the press conference yesterday by the Prime Minister, of the idea that if both packages were submitted to the AIB—namely, the one that the government thinks is desirable, and the one that is about 5 per cent higher that CATCA thinks is desirable—and AIB accepted the higher one, the government would go along with it. I submit that it would go along with it precisely because it has accepted the idea of reclassification.

Reclassification is central to the dispute. It goes back, in terms of discussion, debate and correspondence between the union and the government, to a period preceding the establishment of the controls. But above and beyond that, I do not rest the case on that issue—the case in favour of sympathetic consideration of the principle that reclassification should be accepted as justifying a further increase. I would say it rests on the fact that nowhere in the law as it now exists in Canada is it