

Air Traffic Controllers

is undesirable. Surely that is not the way to settle such strikes. Surely parliament should not be asked to negotiate the terms of a contract for a third party. For that reason I suggest it would have been better to consider this matter in committee. Each of the parties concerned could have been invited to present their side of the dispute to the committee. We could have asked the union to present its side of the story, Treasury Board to present its side, and could have invited members of the public to participate as well. I would have included the public, because its interest is involved, too. But the Minister of Labour did not want to do it this way. He did not want to involve a committee in the negotiations. He thinks such negotiations do not work well, which is why he did not adopt that course.

What are some of the things this bill will do? It speaks of familiarization training, and would establish a wage structure. But we in this House are discussing the classifications of controllers, knowing nothing of such classifications. The President of the Treasury Board suggested that the controllers were entitled to not more than 8 per cent, whether or not they were reclassified.

Normally the question of reclassification does not involve an exclusive advantage to either party in the negotiation. Classifications are usually worked out on the basis of acceptable compromise and are usually founded on increments both sides consider reasonable. Classifications are usually designed to encourage people to assume more responsibility, progressively. You apply for another position, in another classification category, and advance into that category.

Mr. Andras: But classification is not bargainable.

Mr. Peters: The increments are so designed as to encourage people to assume greater responsibility in the new classification. Therefore it is not always to the employee's advantage to move into another category. If he moves into another category with a pay increase, quite often that is not sufficient for the added responsibility. Therefore it is not wise to move.

● (2010)

In my experience in the mining industry, for a long time there were no job classifications. There were a number of set rates. As across the board increases took place, the rates got closer and closer together. It finally reached the point where a qualified miner got approximately ten cents an hour more than his helper. There was no advantage to a helper becoming a runner. For the extra ten cents, he had considerable added responsibility, needed to know more, and was responsible to his partner.

When the classification program was put into effect in my industry, it was mainly for the advantage of the employer. The categories were wide enough apart so that there was an advantage to apply for a higher position. The increment made it worth while. It became advantageous to apply. Quite often classifications are as much to the advantage of the employer as they are to the employee.

[Mr. Peters.]

In the present case if the whole package had been forwarded to the Anti-Inflation Board they may have looked at the advantage to the employer and the advantage to the employee. They might have found that the 4.6 per cent in the reclassification program would have been equally advantageous to the employer and the employee. Therefore it would not have been an advantageous part of the wage package. They might have granted this on the basis that certain jobs were not being filled because the classification program was not up to date.

There will always be situations where the public is hurt extensively, even to the degree where action by parliament is necessary. However, that ought to be the exception, not the rule. It should not be as the Minister of Transport said, spelling out a number of industries that are not to have the benefit of collective bargaining. If that is so, the public had better be prepared. They will have to be overly generous with those categories that will no longer have to justify their wage increases.

There will have to be paternalism. There will have to be advantages such as there were for many years in some industries. We cannot get into the position that the hospital workers and others in similar categories get into because they were not treated generously or even justly. There were terrific repercussions when they finally got the opportunity to do something on their own.

If we are not going to provide a full bargaining position for workers under federal jurisdiction, we must substitute that with generosity. There must be fairness in our negotiations. That could easily be done in this case. The President of the Treasury Board could say that he agrees the strike must end in a fair and reasonable way, that he will establish an arbitration board and abide by their decision. I am sure the union would do the same.

If this had been done originally, the strike would not have taken place. The fact that it is taking place indicates that the Minister of Transport is saying something else. He is saying to *les gens de l'air*, "I will give you a pat on the back by using as rough a technique as I can on those who disagree with you." This has been the result.

There has been a great deal of vindictiveness with regard to indicating the government's position. It was willing to follow the legislative road rather than negotiating before the strike took place. The Minister of Labour will agree, I am sure, that in the three days preceding the strike there was a great possibility of further negotiation. It is my guess that the mediators were not asked to negotiate because they might have settled the problem and eliminated the possibility of this confrontation.

There will be a similar confrontation in the fall. We will be faced with the same problem unless the government treats the unions in a fair and equitable way. Rather than making it mandatory that we legislate them back to work if they go on strike, it should provide arbitration which, if impartial, will undoubtedly be accepted by the unions. We should be thinking about that road in our negotiations rather than passing legislation which is the unacceptable exception and which should be