

tions that there will be more today. In light of the fact that the recently appointed mediator has attempted to determine the flexibility of the negotiating parties, can the minister advise whether in fact the parties are flexible and whether there is hope for an early settlement of this strike?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the parties have assured me that they are prepared to adopt flexible positions when they meet with the mediator. He met with them yesterday and they are now reassessing their positions. They are meeting with the mediator again this afternoon, and I am hopeful that this dispute will be resolved.

Mr. Alexander: Keeping in mind what the minister has stated, and in view of the fact that the president of Air Canada, John Baldwin, has said that this strike action is forcing the airline to consider suspending operations, which would certainly be disastrous for the travelling public, as well as for cargo carrying commitments, may I ask the minister whether he has had an opportunity of discussing this statement with the president of Air Canada? If so, what was the result and are any contingency plans being made?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, comments have been made regarding the possibility that Air Canada might have to close down under certain circumstances for some weeks. This is the element that has injected urgency into attempts to try to bring the parties together and find a settlement. Despite that fact, however, we have to adhere to the principle of free collective bargaining and allow the parties to try to reach a settlement. As far as contingency plans are concerned in the event there is a shutdown, I think this part of the question should be directed to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Minister of Labour for his advice and I will direct that question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact the president of Air Canada has indicated that the strikes are forcing the airline to consider suspending operations, is the minister aware of this and has he been in touch with the president of Air Canada? If so, what has been the result of these discussions and, further, are any contingency plans being made in the event Air Canada does shut down?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the very essence of a strike is to shut down operations. I do not know why the matter is so complicated. If the strikes continue and Air Canada has to shut down, at that moment we will have to take the necessary steps.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

ROTATING STRIKES BY MACHINISTS—DISCUSSION WITH PARTIES ON INTERPRETATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES GUIDELINES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. Has the Minister of Labour or the Prime Minister

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had discussions with both sides in the dispute between Air Canada and the machinists union with respect to the interpretation of the guidelines of the Official Languages Act?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this subject matter has, of course, been discussed during the course of the collective bargaining sessions that have gone on between management and union representatives. I might say, though, that I do not believe this is a major factor in terms of determining whether there will be a settlement of this dispute.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I appeal to hon. members to try to limit the number of supplementaries. If there are seven or eight supplementaries to each question, again many members will be left by the wayside at the end of the question period.

Mr. McGrath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; this is an important and urgent matter. Has the Minister of Transport or the Prime Minister had discussions with the president and the chairman of the board of Air Canada regarding the interpretation of the guidelines of the Official Languages Act as adopted by the House?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the Prime Minister but I do know that I did not have any discussions with the board of Air Canada.

STRIKE BY FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES AT WINNIPEG—PROGRESS TOWARD SETTLEMENT

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. Has the minister or his department discussed with the president of Air Canada the dispute between Air Canada and the Canadian Airline Employees Association, which has resulted in a strike that has now lasted over a month because of the refusal of Air Canada to come anywhere close to agreeing to the unanimous recommendation made by the conciliation board? Has the minister any hope that this dispute will be settled before the accounts reach the point where they will become impossible to sort out?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have. We have had our mediators in on the situation, as I believe the hon. member is aware, in an endeavour to have this dispute resolved. I am aware, as is the hon. member, of the unanimous report of the conciliation board appointed to try to resolve this dispute. The hon. member asked whether I was hopeful, and I should like to say I am hopeful that this labour dispute will be resolved shortly.