

Oral Questions

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: I am not sure how broad the hon. member meant to make his question by referring to everyone "direct and indirect;" therefore I will not even try to grapple with that part of his question. I had not intended to make a statement on motions because I had nothing in the way of principle or policy to add to what was said in the course of the debate on motions last week where the principles were very clearly set out.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: I am in the situation where the rules allow for the tabling of documents at three o'clock and I propose to do that, at which time the documents will become available to all members of this House. That is probably an important consideration as well. I did have the agreement of the parties which had worked on these various documents that we would not make them public at the time of indicating to the public that we had reached an agreement; that we would speak broadly about them but not make them public so that they could indeed be tabled in the House in order that all members might see them. A day of reflection on what is in the documents may be of benefit to members opposite. I will be glad to be here tomorrow to answer questions on them. As I say, if I felt that there was any important change in any policy or principle involved in the documents, I would have made a statement. However, as hon. members will see, the basic principles to which we really all agreed last week stand very firm, so this is simply a matter of settling a dispute at this time and having the airlines fly again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: The minister concluded his remarks by saying that it was simply a matter of getting the airlines flying again. We on this side of the House want the airlines to fly again. However, we feel that in some ways the minister's inflammatory statements and the Prime Minister's inflammatory statements—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should put his supplementary question.

Mr. Horner:—have in fact in some ways delayed a fruitful settlement.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: My question to the minister is quite simple. Can he assure the House that all factions in this dispute have in fact agreed to the settlement? In other words, will he proceed with his legal cases? If someone is sentenced to jail, are we to expect another walkout? These are matters still in the minds of the public and I wish the minister would clear them up.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I would hate to say to the hon. member that those suggestions almost smack of something

inflammatory. However, I would only say that matters before the courts are still before the courts. It was very clear in these discussions that we could not bargain or discuss those matters in any way, but let them pursue their ordinary course. We believe that in this regard the law must be obeyed and pursued. I have some confidence that the air controllers and pilots in this country will be back at work in a full way as a result of this agreement. If the hon. member wants me to assure him that will be true of every pilot and controller in this country, I cannot do so. We have done our very best to give the various assurances that should quiet the fears of almost everyone. I know there are some other people who would like to create additional fear, but I do not think that should be done.

Mr. Horner: With regard to the minister's last remark, we on this side of the House are particularly pleased that he accepted a recommendation made in this House last week that a third party satisfactory to the other side of the dispute be appointed. We graciously gave the minister that advice and we are thankful that he has accepted it. However, his evasion and non-statement today do not help to assure the country—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

POSSIBILITY OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS—DATE OF RESTORATION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SERVICE

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering about some of the legal procedures. For example, a number of public servants have been suspended or had penalties assessed against them. Will the minister make a statement as to whether these will be proceeded with in the normal course of events or whether they will be waived?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member knows of some suspensions or actions of this kind, I would be glad to know about them. I do not have any in mind at this point.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise the House and the country when he expects domestic service to be restored to normal?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, just as soon as that can be done mechanically. Upon arriving at a firm understanding, I am told by the pilots, their various members told the various airline managements at that point that a firm arrangement was in prospect and that shaping of the operation could begin. They felt that some planes might be flying by this very hour and just as fast as normal operations can be resumed, they will be resumed. There are always, of course, technical difficulties in connection with making sure that aircraft are in the right places and that crews are in the right places after a period of disruption such as we have just come through. However, it will only be a matter of a number of hours before fairly normal service is resumed.