

Inquiries of the Ministry

which forms part of the occupational study should be completed early in the new year. Contacts have been made with United States and European authorities and discussions held with a sample of controllers, 160 of them in fact to date, all of whom had an opportunity to discuss it. The Department of National Health and Welfare has also participated in this study. It is still going on.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I will deliberately not ask the President of the Treasury Board any details about the negotiations, but I put this question to him. In view of the fact that the negotiations are at their eleventh hour, is the minister not prepared himself to enter into negotiations immediately instead of his officers having to run back and forth between the negotiating table and the minister to get instructions on what to say and what to propose?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Drury: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lewis: A further supplementary question. Everyone knows that in the case of an industry of this sort the airlines have to make some arrangements and these cannot be made at the last minute. This also applies to the travelling public. The minister's presence here is very welcome on occasion, but should he not be there this afternoon? I also ask him, in view of the urgency of these negotiations, whether it is sensible for the negotiations to go on for an hour or so this morning and then not again until 4.30 this afternoon? This is an urgent matter, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned a moment ago, negotiations not only took place this morning but are continuing right now. There are matters of considerable technical detail currently under discussion. While I accept that the hon. gentleman is considerably more experienced than I in negotiations, I am prepared to accept the advice of those in whom I have great confidence. In this particular case I think the government is well served by the calibre of negotiators that we have. I am prepared to yield to their advice as to when and how I can most usefully make a contribution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for York South has a supplementary. I will recognize him in a moment. I have to

remind hon. members that a decision has been taken to have a debate on this very matter later this afternoon. Perhaps we should keep some of the contributions for that debate. This having been said, however, I invite the hon. member for York South to address his supplementary question.

Mr. Lewis: If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, may I say I understood the meeting was to be at 2.30 but the leader of the House said earlier it was at 4.30. That is how the question arose. I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether he is aware that the Air Traffic Controllers Association is miffed by the fact that they are dealing with the same negotiators they have dealt with for more than six months without result. They have asked for the minister to attend, and in the light of that request would he not consider getting into the negotiations without waiting for his officials to tell him when to come?

Mr. Drury: The Air Traffic Controllers Association through its representatives referred to conscientious, loyal and devoted public servants as office boys. I do not really think that this should be the line for the conduct of intelligent collective bargaining in good faith. I repeat that when it appears that I can make a useful contribution—and it might be later this afternoon—I am ready and willing to do so.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The question I was about to ask relates to the confusion surrounding the announcement by the leader of the House with regard to negotiations at 4.30. I should like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether he thinks the remarks he has just made will contribute to productive negotiations.

An hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): My question is directed to the Minister of Labour who has intervened in connection with labour disputes before. Is he or his department in on the current negotiations?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): That question was asked yesterday. Everybody knows that the Minister of Labour has no direct role to play in the relationship between the government and the employees of the government. However, I would take this opportunity to express my full confidence