

Railway Operations Act

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): The telegrams were phoned to me. I do not know whether the hon. member expects me to telegraph my punches, but I do not intend to do that as long as I am standing here, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I should like to ask the hon. member a question through you, Mr. Chairman.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Chair can always agree, but does the hon. member agree to answer a question?

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): Mr. Chairman I shall be very brief and then entertain any question from either side of the House.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I will send him a telegram then.

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): I was just going to cite one more example of the dire situation of the railroad workers. Their basic wage rate is \$2.39 an hour, according to my information. Most of the workers I talked to would get more money if they went on welfare in British Columbia. I cannot understand why they work eight hours a day for that money.

For the information of the hon. member for Temiscamingue who constantly attacks the government of British Columbia, I would point out that the basic wage in British Columbia will soon be \$2.50 an hour. That is 11 cents an hour more than the present base rate paid by the railroads. I cannot understand why the hon. member is forever attacking the government of British Columbia when he knows so little of what goes on in his own province, let alone in one so far from La Belle province.

I want to conclude by saying that this is just a charade that we go through with the railroad workers. We try to point out to them that they have a right to free collective bargaining when we know they have not. Sooner or later we must devise some other system to resolve their problems or we are going to find ourselves right back here. Even if we force them back to work now, we will be back here in two years in the same position. When that time comes they will not only be asking for an increase to match the cost of living but will be asking to catch up with other workers, and they are entitled to that.

We had better take a good look at what we are doing, Mr. Chairman, because I expect to see serious dislocation in the railroads across the country.

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Westminster that subclause (1) of clause 9 be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

(1) The terms and conditions of each collective agreement to which this Part applies are amended forthwith by increasing each hourly basic rate of wages in effect on December 31, 1972, as established by or pursuant to such agreement, by ten and eight-tenths per cent effective January 1, 1973, and by increasing each hourly basic rate of wages in effect on December 31, 1973, as established by or pursuant to such agreement and pursuant to this Part, by ten and eight-tenths per cent effective January 1, 1974.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Shall I read the amendment?

Mr. Reynolds: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Cafik.]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order please. I shall put the motion first. Shall I dispense with reading the motion?

Some hon. Members: Dispense.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta.

Mr. Reynolds: I wonder if I could have the permission of the House to ask the previous speaker a question.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The time of the hon. member had not expired. Is it agreed?

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): Yes, I agree.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the previous speaker on some points and know that he is a very well respected labour leader in my province. I know he has been in contact with the union people and their leaders today, as I have. I should like to ask him this question: when parliament does pass this bill, as we expect it will shortly, and the bill becomes the law of the land, will the hon. member do his duty as a member of parliament and advise his workers that they should go back to work?

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): Mr. Chairman, I said previously that I would not telegraph my punches and I do not think that kind of question even deserves an answer in this House.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for St. Boniface on a point of order.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Chairman, possibly my question may be easier for the hon. member to answer. I should like to ask why his party now accepts the suspension of the right to strike for railway workers. Is this a new policy of the NDP?

● (0110)

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): Mr. Chairman, there is another question that requires an answer. We have not said we agree with lifting the right to strike. We have not yet voted on this bill.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Amendment negatived: Yeas, 26; nays, 153.

Clause 9 agreed to.

On Clause 10—*Railway companies and unions to negotiate.*

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Chairman, I rise to put a protest on record. During this debate it has been pointed out more than once by members from all parties that the non-operatives now on strike are receiving no strike pay. This is a ridiculous situation. Throughout their years of service to the railways, these men have paid their union dues. For the most part this money has gone to the United States. They are receiving no remuneration from these American based International unions.

Some time ago in this House I protested the fact that certain steel workers in my constituency were sending