

*Privilege—Mr. Watson*

**Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, as the present member for Vancouver South and one who ran against our friend Arthur Laing in the 1968 election and was soundly trounced because of his superior political abilities, I say with a great deal of sincerity that I am sure my colleagues from British Columbia would want to be associated with the tributes that have been made in this House today. I would also like to say—I think I can say this on behalf of the electors of Vancouver South—that our friend was regarded, through all the years he served that community, with great affection and great admiration. That affection was a rare thing and rose continually above the partisan political scene within which we find ourselves.

I should like to end on a personal note, Mr. Speaker. I knew Arthur Laing for many years. Even though I was his political opponent, he treated me with extraordinary kindness and generosity and, with respect to my own political ambitions, a great deal of encouragement. It speaks very highly of him when I say he understood the political process and realized that people needed encouragement to enter this field. In this regard he rose beyond party and partisan politics. It is my very great privilege, Mr. Speaker, to endorse the comments that have been made and to express to Mrs. Laing and the family our deepest sympathy.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. WATSON—AIR CANADA REQUEST THAT EMPLOYEES BE PROHIBITED FROM COMPLAINING TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Ian Watson (Laprairie):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege concerning a position taken by Air Canada which affects my rights as a member of this House and which I believe affects the rights of all members of the House. The episode started with an incident on Dominion Day, 1973, when the chief shop steward and a number of other employees at the power plant in Dorval were obliged to work on the national holiday by Air Canada. He left work early and was penalized. Some of his fellow workers contacted me about this penalty which they felt was poisoning labour-management relations at the Air Canada power plant, at Dorval.

There was an exchange of correspondence between myself and the Minister of Transport as well as between other members of parliament and the ministers concerned. The final result was a Canada Labour Relations Board hearing on December 4, 1974. At Mr. Morrison's request I attended that hearing to lend him moral support. It was apparently my presence at the hearing as an onlooker that sparked Air Canada into making a formal representation to the Canada Labour Relations Board asking for a ruling which would forbid individuals with a complaint before that board to contact members of parliament. In other words, Air Canada, a Crown corporation, on December 4,

[Mr. Marchand (Kamloops-Cariboo).]

1974, made a formal request to the Canada Labour Relations Board for a ruling that persons making use of the board's services be prohibited from complaining to their members of parliament. The lawyer for Air Canada said:

● (1120)

I still feel that at some point the board should pronounce itself on this issue.

He went on to say:

That interference from outside sources, and I am referring particularly to outside political sources, should try to influence the parties or the board in any fashion whatsoever is a practice which is probably not that new and yet I find it, as I have said before, (a) most objectionable and a pernicious practice which I think must be terminated. Now, whether the president of the board can do so with a decision or whether it would have been the intention of the board to even pronounce itself on this question and include remarks in its decision to that effect, I don't know. I would strongly suggest that this be the case.

Later he said:

I will insist that the board perhaps include some remarks in the decision on that ground.

Since, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge neither the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), myself nor anyone else in parliament has made any representations to the Labour Relations Board, I can only conclude that the Air Canada representative was objecting to my presence as an onlooker and a moral supporter of Mr. Morrison at the Labour Relations Board hearing, and that he was objecting and asking for a ruling on the letters which I had written on Mr. Morrison's behalf to the Minister of Labour, to the Minister of Transport and to the executive assistant to the president of Air Canada.

I must apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, for the delay in raising this question of privilege. My office made two requests of the Labour Relations Board for a transcript of the hearing but was unable to get this transcript. Only after I was supplied with a tape of the hearing by the Labour Relations Board was I able to have a transcript made in my office from the tape which was eventually supplied to me. The issue would be serious enough if the representatives of a private corporation had objected to citizens contacting their member of parliament. But it is incredible that a federal Crown corporation should make a formal representation to the Canada Labour Relations Board for a ruling prohibiting citizens appearing before the board from contacting their members of parliament.

Mr. Speaker, this is the most unbelievable episode I have come across since being elected to this House. Air Canada, in making this kind of representation, was acting not only in breach of the rights of all members of parliament but it was acting in contempt of parliament itself. I believe that there is a prima facie breach of privilege involved in this incident, and should Your Honour so rule I would be ready to move that the matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Laprairie (Mr. Watson). Mr. Morrison one of my constituents—I say this to show the relevance of my being involved in this matter—has been coming to me regularly since my election in 1972. For the information of hon. members he, as shop steward, protested