

indeed the Order in Council that was passed on May 13, in the first preamble paragraph, make clear where the government stands on this issue, I should like to ask the minister, in order to remove all uncertainty on the issue, whether he will assure the House that safety on this issue will remain paramount and that if it is found that safety would be jeopardized by any extension of bilingualism in respect of air traffic control in Quebec it will not be undertaken.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to express my appreciation to the hon. member for inviting me to again state most definitely what is the case, which is that safety is foremost. If safety were in any way jeopardized by any procedures suggested in the use of bilingualism in air traffic control in Canada we would not implement those procedures because safety is foremost and that is a fact.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REASON FOR SPEEDY PROSECUTION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I most sincerely thank the minister for that unequivocal and clear answer. I should like now to turn to the President of the Treasury Board. Since one of the basic principles of effective labour relations is to maintain civil relations between the two groups in conflict, and since the Prime Minister in the House yesterday expressed a desire that both parties to the current air dispute "cool it", I should like to ask the President of the Treasury Board to tell us why the government's immediate response to the Winnipeg walkout was to apply the full and literal force of the law to the people involved, instead of sending an emissary to negotiate a speedy resolution of the conflict?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of Treasury Board): I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that we had no choice at all because the law of the land has to be respected. In fact Mr. Justice Addy, if the hon. member would read the judgment, made it a condition that he would render a judgment in injunctions if the government were ready to take its responsibility to make sure that the injunction would be respected and this is exactly what we have done.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well—certainly his colleague the Minister of Labour knows—that the full and vigorous application of the letter of the law can cause more harm than good if the hope is to get a settlement. I should like to ask the minister whether it is the government's position on this particular dispute that it should remain with a hands-off attitude and simply let the situation be resolved in terms of the law as it now exists.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have a contract with the air traffic controllers and we have asked them to respect it. We went in front of the court. The court said we had a contract and ordered the air traffic controllers to go back

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to work. It is the policy of the government to make sure that no one in this land is above the law.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN DAIRY POLICY

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Following the last subsidy received by the Quebec milk producers, many of these have lost considerable revenue because of the new government dairy policy which penalizes those who have worked. Also, the President of the Treasury Board was visited last weekend by some milk producers and according to newspaper reports the minister assured them he would discuss this question with his colleague, the Minister of Agriculture. In view of these facts, could the minister tell the House whether discussions did take place with the Minister of Agriculture in this respect, and whether this policy can be changed in the near future to prevent many Quebec dairy farms from going under?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to talk briefly with the Minister of Agriculture about this, and I believe that meetings are now taking place between representatives of the union of Quebec milk producers and spokesmen from the Department of Agriculture to try and find a solution. The Minister of Agriculture has already announced that in the case of those who have farm mortgages granted by the Farm Credit Corporation, the latter will not demand payments as a measure to help farmers.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

As the solution proposed by the Minister of Agriculture—and endorsed, I suppose, by the President of the Treasury Board, whereby payments due by the farmers would be postponed—is not in fact a solution since the debts will remain and income will be lost, could the minister recommend to his cabinet colleague a solution that could really solve the acute problem that now exists and threatens the very existence of many dairy farms in Quebec?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the government is aware of some difficulties. However, we hope to find administrative solutions to those problems. The hon. member should recognize that the problem faced today by the farmers is the result of overproduction last year, and they in turn should also recognize that they must reduce their production.

As for administrative steps, I know the Minister of Agriculture is trying to find a solution in consultation with the interested parties. In addition, if my information is correct, some time this week he will be meeting some of