

Inquiries of the Ministry

Air Canada, in a matter which is so disruptive communications in this country?

Hon. Bryce S. Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the question was posed by such an experienced member of the House of Commons, who really appreciates that a wide and sweeping statement as to all the issues involved could only jeopardize what are very delicate negotiations. Provided the house has a little confidence in the Minister of Labour—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mackasey:—and will not aggravate a very delicate situation for the sake of curiosity, we may be able to bring this matter to a successful conclusion pretty soon.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I refrain from comment on that answer. Perhaps the minister could take the house and the country into his confidence and tell us in general terms—we are not asking for the dollars and cents—whether it is a question of wages, fringe benefits, seniority; or what are the problems?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has done a very capable job of outlining the problems yet to be resolved in all these areas. I can assure the house that if the matter is not settled fairly soon, and I think one party or the other is to blame, I will assume my responsibility as Minister of Labour to inform the Canadian public, in the house, what I think is the reason for this dispute. I will have no hesitation in telling the house and the country who is the culprit, if there is a culprit, in the dispute.

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question. Is the minister now preparing to apply his well known personal magnetism to bring about a speedy settlement of this dispute?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With all due deference, I am not trying to fix any blame. I am just asking the minister, because of his interest—I am sure his interest is shared by all—in getting this dispute settled, whether he will tell the house in general terms just what might be the issues.

Mr. Mackasey: The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

STRIKE OF MECHANICS—ALTERNATE SERVICE BY REGIONAL AIR CARRIERS

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Is the government considering the expansion of services by regional air carriers both for the present and future, so that in the event of disruption of air service as at present the public will have more alternate service available?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the air policy announced several years ago does provide for the strengthening and growth of the regional air carriers, as business available to support them increases.

Mr. Baldwin: Is that 30 years ago?

STRIKE OF MECHANICS—TRANSPORTATION OF PERISHABLE GOODS

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. Yesterday, in reply to a question on the subject of baby chicks, the minister indicated that he would check into the situation with a view to making all possible arrangements to facilitate the movement of these baby chicks. Has the minister had a chance to look into the situation, and can he report on the success of his investigation?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have had a preliminary look at it. The regional carriers are able to undertake shipments over the distances they operate. There are, I understand, two regional carriers in a position to offer charter flights which might be useful for the chicks.

It has been suggested to some of the producers that they might get in touch with these operators to see if it is possible to charter flights which would help them out in the situation. In addition, I think there are one or two circumstances in which it will be necessary to have the co-operation of the Canadian Pacific Airlines, and I will make representations directly to the airlines to see if they will not help out.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister would take kindly the suggestion that he get in touch with the Department of Transport to see whether they could move perishable goods, including chicks, to the domestic market in Canada and also to the export market in Japan.