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Sunday, March 26, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Sunday, March 26, 1995

The House met at 1 p.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS ACT, 1995

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.) moved that Bill C-77, an act to provide for the maintenance of railway operations and subsidiary services, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, the current dispute in the railway sector requires firm intervention by the government to ensure the resumption or continuing, as the case may be, of railway operations and subsidiary services.

It is also important to provide a process to resolve matters remaining in dispute between the parties. The bill before the House today, the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act, 1995, orders the resumption of operations at Canadian National, Canadian Pacific and VIA Rail, and provides for establishing mediation-arbitration commissions in respect of each of the bargaining units of the three railway companies.

As hon. members are aware, negotiations in this dispute have been extremely difficult. They covered a number of complex issues including employment security, occupational flexibility, extended routes and the two-tier compensation system for train crews. Despite efforts to reach an agreement which went on for several months, the parties failed to agree on these crucial issues.

Both the unions and the employers agreed that Canada needs a viable and competitive railway system. Even the Bloc Quebecois admitted as much in its motion in amendment of section 12. The matters remaining in dispute must be resolved if the parties are to start establishing relations that will help them meet the challenges of the future.

I believe the dispute settlement process provided under this legislation will help them defend and reconcile their interests dispassionately and objectively. It did not take long for the impact of work stoppages occurring in the railway sector to be felt across the country. The disruption in railway operations has affected certain industries, which are now unable to obtain the parts and supplies they need for their operations and cannot ship their goods to destinations on domestic or the world markets.

Many businesses that depend on railway freight services are being forced to lay off workers. The economic repercussions of a prolonged work stoppage in the railway sector are very serious and cannot be tolerated for very long. The same applies to the impact on passengers who normally take VIA Rail and are now deprived of those services.

I realize that the parties have tried to settle the various disputes, but the government is faced with a situation that requires immediate and decisive intervention. Consequently, last Tuesday, I had to table the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act, 1995. This legislation consists of three parts. Part I concerns the Canadian National Railway Company; Part II concerns the Canadian Pacific system and Part III concerns VIA Rail Canada.

All three parts of this legislation shall come into force 12 hours after the bill has received royal assent. Under this legislation, the disputes will be quickly resolved, thanks to a mediation-arbitration commission that will have 70 days to carry out its mandate. The mediation-arbitration process gives the parties one last chance to reach an agreement with the help of the commission. If at this stage the parties are unable to reach an agreement, the commission will have the power to make final and binding decisions on the matters remaining in dispute.

In its work, the commission shall be guided by the need for terms and conditions of employment that are consistent with the economic viability and competitiveness of a coast-to-coast rail system in both the short and the long term, taking into account the importance of good labour-management relations. In the course of the debate on this bill, we have heard different interpretations of sections 12, 34 and 56 from the employers, the unions and the Bloc Quebecois, and I would like to clarify the legislator's intent in this respect.

The best job protection that workers can have is the certainty that their employer is competitive. In this context, it is increasingly clear with successful companies that competitiveness depends on good human resources management, which includes harmonious labour relations. We realize as well that various

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internal and external factors may affect a business' competitiveness, including such things as quality of management, efficient financial management and, in the case of railways, appropriate regulations, not to mention the economic environment the business is in.

There is another factor we must not forget, however, and that is labour costs. In the present case, we want both parties to come to terms with these facts. Accordingly, the legislator must express the commissions' mandate clearly. We are not requiring the commissions to achieve specific results in terms of job security clauses or any other working condition of the railway workers.

The unions and the companies will have ample time to tell the commissions what working conditions they consider consistent with economic viability and good union-management relations. No specific results must be achieved. We have simply indicated the factors the commissions are to take into consideration in their deliberations.

(1310)

Moreover, it is only if the parties fail to reach an agreement on these matters during the mediation period, that the commissions will have to reach a final decision. All in all, this is a fair approach to resolving the disputes between the parties.

I would like it to be perfectly clear that the government remains firmly convinced that collective bargaining is a far better way to resolve disputes than emergency legislation. It is significant that nothing in the legislation prevents the parties from modifying any provision in the collective agreements, new or changed, except for the provision on the term of these agreements.

Furthermore, should the parties reach an interim agreement or concur on the approach to resolving the matters in dispute, the establishment of the mediation-arbitration commission could be deferred.

The facts speak for themselves. Considerable effort has gone into resolving the various disputes between the three railways and the various unions, but to no avail. The bill before us gives the parties one final chance to agree through mediation, before the outstanding issues are submitted to arbitration.

Since the start of negotiations, the parties have indicated that they were opposed to legislation to put an end to the dispute, and I agreed with them on this point. Unfortunately, they have not managed to reach an agreement and, as a result, have caused serious economic problems in the country by initiating work stoppages. As the government, we took the necessary steps and tabled the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act, 1995.

I therefore ask my hon. colleagues to support this measure so that it may be adopted.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, regarding this issue, the Bloc deplures the government's simplistic position and its extravagant if not biased speeches.

The government has always stressed the negative repercussions of the strike and its real economic impact, of which we all are aware, and really went overboard on the issue. It kept on repeating that factories were closing everywhere in Canada, coast to coast, particularly in Quebec, since the Bloc Quebecois was the government's main opponent in the House on the issue. Very few economic sectors in Quebec were spared the threat of imminent closures, yet nothing of the sort actually happened.

The government tried to terrorize and brainwash people by exaggerating the economic consequences. I do not want to minimize the consequences, but I think that a government dealing with such an extensive labour dispute, like the one currently affecting the country, should be more reserved, impartial and objective. The government should not upset people; it should reassure them while trying to find a solution. The government did the opposite. We were witness to an incredible demagogic offensive, we were bombarded with a slew of disastrous predictions, which did not turn out to be accurate.

We must nevertheless acknowledge that considerable economic interests and jobs are at stake, not only in the sector directly affected, but also in the sectors spinning off from it.

We are not oblivious to the economic impact of the strike. We proved this by proposing to the government, as early as last Monday, a classic solution of the sort normally used to settle this kind of dispute.

With such an important issue, it is not only necessary to look at the economic impact, but also to be nuanced. So, this is an example of the kind of issue debated in the Parliament of Canada where we need to examine all facets, if we are to debate it wisely and carefully, in the interest of all.

(1315)

One of them is also, of course, that there are important issues and interests at stake that immediately call into question Canadian democracy, Quebec democracy and parliamentary democracy, and this has been forgotten in the debate.

What we in the Bloc Quebecois wanted to do was to situate the dispute, and the resolution mechanism, in the perspective of a balance to be achieved between the right to negotiate and peace on the labour front, for all of this was at stake. It is not true that because a strike has broken out that an illegal act has been committed. It is not true that because a strike has broken out that it is necessary to push the panic button, to bring out the big guns.

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And it is not true that because a strike has broken out that the opposition can be prevented from speaking about it in this House. Events have taken a very strange turn this week.

The Bloc has been vilified for wanting to recognize rights that exist in law, in legislation passed not by a foreign Parliament, but by the Parliament of Canada, legislation that provides for the right to strike, that recognizes the existence in Canada of this fundamental democratic right.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: In a democracy such as ours, in a country in which we have often been faced with labour disputes and in which we have acquired some experience in resolving this sort of conflict in a civilized and competent manner, it is vital that we take this opportunity to examine the need to maintain some sort of balance.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I am disturbing the people across the way who are speaking.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Order. Colleagues, this debate is so important that we are sitting on a Sunday. It is a very historic sitting. I would ask all hon. members to have the courtesy to please hear out the person who has the floor at this time and all other members who will be speaking in this debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, we have a system of law. We live in a society governed by laws. We have a parliamentary institution, and a government, charged with enforcing existing legislation. The entire Canadian legal system as it relates to labour relations is based on the freedom to negotiate, on the objective of ensuring peace between the parties to an industrial dispute and the harmonious operation of the factories and workplaces once the dispute has been resolved. I believe that the freedom to negotiate is a key element in all of this.

The freedom to negotiate is dependent on the balance between two powers: the very important economic power wielded by the employer, which is countered by the union with its own brand of power, given to it under law in the form of the right to strike. It is a legislated right.

One would think that, generally and normally, when both parties exert pressure, when they act in good faith without anyone trying to disrupt the process, when they are willing to make concessions, with common sense prevailing, an agreement will eventually be reached. The legal system and government services are designed to help reach an agreement because everyone understands that the best and only effective solution is a negotiated solution.

What happened in this case? They may well criticize the Bloc Quebecois for being the only party in this House which defends the legal system of free collective bargaining. Well and good,

but they forget that the main culprit in this dispute is the government, in particular the Minister of Labour, who turned into an employer in this matter.

They will say that, the opposition being the opposition, it will attack the government and try to bend the truth a little. It is common practice in politics.

(1320)

Instead, let us read the report and conclusions of an impartial witness, conciliation commissioner Hope, whose job was to observe, minute by minute, the progress of the negotiations.

This report contains devastating comments on the behaviour of the government and the Minister of Transport. In this matter, the government, far from favouring settlement and protecting against any external disruptions the progress of the usual settlement mechanisms whose results are based on free collective bargaining, sought to disrupt and destroy this balance by siding with the employer. I would even say that it became an employer. The government behaved like an employer in this matter. I would go so far as to say that it prevented the official employers from negotiating.

Let us suppose for a moment that we are all CN presidents—we would be happy in some respects, of course, as this would be a remarkable promotion—and that our representatives, reporting on the discussions, tell us that we ought to make concessions on our demands to drop non-monetary clauses, that if we make no concessions, the resulting strike would hurt us and that the public may not appreciate our behaviour during the negotiations, so that we must make concessions.

Normally in such conditions, an employer makes concessions and uses some common sense to reach a compromise with the union, which is also under pressure. But why would an employer negotiate when, like the president of the CN in this case, he has the government's assurance that it supports his position, as denounced in the Hope report, when he knows that the government is 100 per cent behind him and that, in the event of a labour dispute, the government will take out the bludgeon to quash immediately the right to strike and pass special legislation providing for a third party to impose working conditions? There is no motivation to do so.

In fact, the employers did not negotiate in this case. They did not negotiate because they relied on the complicity, I would say the collusion, of the Minister of Transport, expecting him to make sure that back to work legislation would be tabled in this House within hours of the start of a strike or lockout.

So, what was bound to happen did: the employers put on the table major clawback demands and, according to Mr. Hope, refused to negotiate. They even refused to consider the possibility that their demands be discussed or revised in any way, or that reservations be made about them. They did not even take part in

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discussions on their demands. It was a take it or leave it proposition.

So, of course, this led to a conflict. Barely 12 hours into this conflict—and this illustrates what I just said—the Minister of Labour, who is new to the issue, sets in motion a process to break the strike through special legislation. The Minister of Labour is therefore a major player in this issue. We must recognize however that there was not much she could do because, as the saying goes, the scene was set. All she now had to do was follow the script. The scene was set thanks to the great producing abilities of the Minister of Transport.

What could she do except become the employer herself and ensure that the strike could be quashed immediately, while at the same time setting the working conditions? I think that a Minister of Labour worthy of the name would have borne in mind that she or he has a job to do and is not accountable to the Minister of Finance—who wants to privatize CN—but is responsible for social peace and to the parties. Her role involved trust and confidence.

The Minister of Labour should tell her colleague for transport that, while he had been able to reach the agreements he wanted with his friends, the employers, she, as Minister of Labour, could not take sides, that she was responsible for social justice and fairness. What should she have done then?

(1325)

I am not saying that the government should tolerate the negative effects of a strike indefinitely. It would have been appropriate to table this special legislation on Monday and get the parties back to work. It is at this level that the Minister of Labour could have played an important part in cabinet. She could have enlightened her cabinet colleagues and told them: “Yes, we will get these people back to work to avoid the negative effects of the strike, but we will also ensure that the parties can negotiate without interference, while it is still time to do so. For the first time in this conflict, we will put in place conditions such that the parties involved can negotiate in good faith and find a solution to their problems. We will force the employer to negotiate by not giving it the assurance that the government will impose back-to-work legislation and thus serve its interests”.

The Minister of Labour knew what to do very well. She was very familiar with the usual solution in such a conflict. This is something that people involved in labour relations learn quickly. The minister knew what to do: go to mediation. She knew it so well that she did so in another conflict, in Montreal, which had persisted for 25 months. In this case, it has been 18 months, but in Montreal, it had been 25 months. So what did she do? Following the wise counsel of her senior officials, and assuming her responsibility as Minister of Labour, she decided that there

would be mediation in the Port of Montreal conflict, to force the parties to conduct true negotiations under appropriate conditions, so that a negotiated solution might be reached. The process proved to be successful in the days that followed. Considering that the solution is known and that it gave very positive results in Montreal, why does the Minister of Labour decide to go all out in the case of the railway work stoppage and pass a piece of legislation imposing working conditions?

I want to be clear. We are not opposed to back-to-work legislation. We believe it is legitimate to resort to such legislation and we would have agreed to do so as early as tomorrow, so that by Monday evening the act would have been passed in this House. However, we do not accept the fact that this situation be used as a smoke screen. After all, what do you think is the goal of the government in this issue?

Some hon. members: Hear. Hear.

Mr. Bouchard: The comments I just made raise a question. Those who may be listening to us on this lovely Sunday afternoon may ask themselves: What did he just say? Why would the government do such a thing? Why would a decent and responsible government do that? Why would a government team up with the employers to distort the conflict resolution process? This is a good question, but we have the answer.

The answer was provided by the Minister of Transport. The Minister of Transport himself told us in this House last week, I think it was on Thursday, but I could be wrong, any way he told us on Wednesday or Thursday in answer to a question put to him: “Yes, but the truth is that our goal is to get rid of some provisions in the collective agreements”. They do not like these collective agreements, so they are going to change them, to do a hatchet job, to scrap them.

Once this is done, they will be able to soothe the employers and sell the CN. They will sell the CN and make a lot of money out of it, because they will do so at the expense of the workers and of their rights and entitlements. They will shave down the collective agreements and then hand a very nice package to the private companies interested in buying the CN. This is the goal sought by the minister. He has said so in this House. We thought that was what he was trying to achieve, in fact, we were quite sure of it, but now he has admitted it.

An hon. member: Shame!

Mr. Bouchard: I think the government was swayed by the interests of the employers in this issue. You can tell just by the way it has handled it, if only at the parliamentary level. Will people not find it strange how eager the government was to muzzle the opposition, to use tactics which had never been used before in this House? For the first time ever, a gag was put on committee proceedings. That is really something. Was there an emergency? Was there an imminent political crisis? Was there a

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state of war? No. But the government was eager to fulfil its commitments to its friends in the railway companies.

(1330)

The government wanted to do a job on the CN collective agreements, in order to be able to sell the company for less. This is the goal it was aiming for and that is why, throughout last week, the government did things I really did not like. One of our hon. colleagues, the government whip, even stated yesterday that the Bloc was costing the taxpayers \$17,000 a hour, all for nothing. We, in the official opposition, were blamed for having these sittings. We, in the official opposition, in a democracy, were blamed for making Parliament work. Here was someone complaining because we have a Parliament. With this kind of arguments, we will soon be without a Parliament at all, we will just have to close shop.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: What are we debating here this weekend? I understand that the government is very unhappy to be working on Saturday and Sunday—maybe not as unhappy as NDP members, our allies in the defence of social causes, who have not shown up at all during these two days—but are we not dealing with some important issues? We did not come here this weekend to talk about trivial things. We came here to talk about Canadian democracy. We came here to try and find a way to reconcile two fundamental rights, namely the right of citizens to have access to public services, in this case rail transport, and the right of unions and workers to negotiate their own working conditions instead of having these conditions imposed on them by the government or by an arbitration commission.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Bloc Québécois is proud of the way it has defended the rights of workers in this dispute. Even if we were the last party left in this House to defend the rights of workers, and it seems to be the case, we would be proud to do so. It is a tribute to Canadian democracy and I think that we should be recognized for doing this job for and in the place of the Liberals who have abandoned their traditional creed and who, just like the New Democrats, frightened by the right wing wind that has been blowing in this House since the arrival of the Reform Party, have caved in to the pressure in a situation which, normally, would not have warranted this course of action.

All the Liberals who are here have made speeches in the House in the past to defend the very same viewpoint that we are defending today. I am sure that they feel bad and that they regret giving in to the pressure from the Reform Party because soon there will be only one party in Canada apart from the Bloc, and it will be the Reform Party and what it stands for.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: Of course, there will be consequences. The government may have conducted fifteen polls over the last week—a government has money to conduct polls—and these polls may have shown that people in English Canada support the Liberals' position, but it has to be careful not to be shortsighted. This situation will have far-reaching effects and the government, having chosen to have working conditions imposed by a third party, will find itself in an awkward situation when it is all over.

I wonder how the government will be able to sell CN if the labour relations climate in that company is what it could become after this move by the government. I hope not, but the climate may not be very good. When employees are legislated back to work and, especially, when they know that their terms and conditions of employment will be determined by a third party, that nothing will be up to them to decide and that vested rights will be dropped, the climate may not be very conducive to efficient privatization.

Furthermore, this government feels it made a tremendous concession by promising, and in fact this is in the bill, to have judges chair the arbitration commissions. I have every respect for judges. I am a lawyer, and I know we have the best judges anyone could wish. The integrity of our judicial system is beyond question, and I am glad to have an opportunity to say this, but because of that integrity, our judges will act according to the mandate they are given.

What will that mandate be? If we look at clause 12, we see that the arbitrators will have an extremely narrow mandate to work with. The arbitrators have no flexibility because they will have to make their decisions strictly on the basis of economic viability and competitiveness in the short and longer term. This means, and I refer to the people who accept these appointments, that their hands are tied, and I know several people who will refuse to sit on these commissions. There are decent people who will refuse to sit under those conditions because they do not have enough latitude to hand down a fair judgment. I am not saying that those who do accept are any less decent, and I have every respect for them, but they will be working within a very restrictive framework where they will have no flexibility and will have to more or less accept the employers' arguments, one by one.

(1335)

They are going to change the role of the arbitrators as well, or at least try, by turning them into the employers' allies. The Minister of Transport probably had something to do with that as well.

I wish the Minister of Labour, in her initial performance as minister, had been more impervious to the power-hungry demands of the Department of Transport's appetite for power.

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We can only hope that everything will turn out well. I hope so. But the trouble with this debate is that the government tried to suppress it. The government tried to suppress the debate. This government does not like debate. It does not like dissenting opinions. This government will only give in to its own impulses.

In concluding, we will vote against this legislation, of course, and we hope that in the future, the Department of Labour will take a more objective stand and will act more responsibly with respect to its obligations to the parties, both employees and employers, because there are not only employers, there are also employees.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are sitting here today on a Sunday, I am told, for the first time in the history of Parliament at a cost of \$25,000 an hour.

Why are we here? We are here because of very vindictive, narrow minded, malicious partisan politics brought on us by members of the Bloc Quebecois. They have done it for two reasons.

They have done it, and it seems appropriate, to try to get their separatist movement back on the tracks. It seems they do not care what else they derail in the process of doing it. Also they have done it to hit the Liberal Minister of Labour in her home area of the Montreal docks. This is the kind of vindictive partisan politics that makes this place something less than the public has a right to expect. That is the reason we are here this weekend.

The reason we are here at all, however, is that the Liberal government did not act as quickly on the matter as it could and did not act long before it happened to prevent it from happening in the first place.

The reason that we come to Parliament is twofold. First, it is to bring solutions for new problems such as the drunk defence. It was something that was not anticipated but it came about and requires legislation to repair it. Second, we come here to provide solutions to all problems brought forward by the parties and people of the past, problems such as the budget.

We try to find permanent solutions to different problems, not stop gap ones. It does little good to sit in Parliament and come up with a solution that will have to be repeated year after year. The solution to the transportation problem has to be a permanent one. The Liberals have failed to do it in the past and their current legislation fails to address the permanent need for a solution as well.

Transportation strikes are not new. Turning to recent history the Vancouver port was out in 1994 and back to work legislation was brought in. What was wrong with the legislation? There were two things wrong. First, as in this case it took too long to

come forward. There was a lot of economic pain and suffering by people far beyond the port of Vancouver. We will never recover from some of that damage. Second, the Liberals brought in something relatively new by way of settlement, final settlement offer legislation.

(1340)

That is something I favour but it was wrong in the way they did it in that specific case, the reason being that the two parties had bargained on the basis of an old system. When they were given the new system they were not given the opportunity to go back to the table to try to resolve the problem using the benefits of the new type of settlement. The concept was good but the method in which it was done was not as good as it could have been.

Then there was another Vancouver strike in 1995. That time it took only two days for the Liberals to act to get the port, which is very crucial to the entire Canadian transportation structure, back to work.

What is interesting is that we have the Bloc Quebecois sitting down the way, these brand new saviours of the labour movement in Canada. These were identical situations. In neither case did we hear a single word from the Bloc Quebecois. I reject its rationale for being the great voice of labour this time. It is nothing but petty partisan politics.

Now we have a rail strike affecting all of Canada. The Liberal legislation that is coming forward does not resolve the short term wrong because of the method of arbitration. The Liberals have gone back on the solution they used in Vancouver in 1994 and have gone to straight binding arbitration. Hopefully the two parties will be able to get together during the mediation period and resolve some of the differences. However the most outstanding issue, that of job security, is unlikely to be resolved through regular bargaining across the table.

When it comes time to move to the arbitration settlement we have an arbitration council set up with one representative of the union, one representative of the company which is owned by the government, and one representative selected by the government. Is there anyone in the House who has any doubt about how the arbitration will come out?

The whole way in which labour negotiations are carried out is unbalanced and unfair in our modern society. If the employees of a whole chain of grocery stores in the Ottawa area including all the surrounding communities went out on strike or were locked out for some reason, it would be primarily between the employees and the owners of the store. People would be inconvenienced but they have alternatives. Life would go on. The general economy would not be hurt.

However it is absolutely unthinkable that we would have the police standing by watching someone being mugged or raped because the police were out on strike. It is equally unthinkable that we would have a fireman standing by on a sidewalk

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watching a house burn, perhaps with a small child inside, because the firemen were out on strike.

For 22 years I was an air traffic controller. During that time there were two strikes, both of very short duration. In both cases the controllers were legislated back to work. In both cases when the controllers were on strike they did not picket because they recognized that a relative handful of people had too catastrophic an effect on the entire air transportation industry and it would be unfair and unrealistic to put up a picket line.

It ended up that air traffic controllers to this day retain the right to strike but each and every controller is designated in the event of a strike to provide minimum safety services. It has been decreed and declared in court that those minimum services are everything they do. The reality is that they can go on strike but they still report to work, the only difference being that their contract is null and void. They are in great jeopardy of having something legislated that bears no resemblance to their old contract.

We penalize certain groups of people in society because they are important. We have to come up with some kind of alternative so that we can fairly deal with people who are important. If we can come up with something that is fair and equitable, why should we not look at broadening the type of system it replaces?

Long ago in the history of mankind people lived in caves. They had no fire for a long period of time. They got their food by going out with clubs and hunting down wild animals. We have progressed from that. We progressed into the Middle Ages when there was slavery and continuous ongoing wars. We evolved further and developed North America. Still there were very tough times. There were winters when many people starved to death. There were diseases for which there was no treatment. There was a lack of help for people in any situation. The changes that have taken place are evolutionary. This is the way we progressed and evolved into the society we have now.

(1345)

Unions started in the 19th century because companies were oppressive. The managers and owners of certain big industries were absolutely brutal in their unfair treatment of workers. That was the origin of unions. Then we got into the process we have today, this concept of negotiation and strike when agreements could not be reached.

That started in the 19th century. As we approach the 21st century is it not realistic to think there should be some evolution in the process of trade unionism and in labour/management negotiations? It is time for evolution to take place in that area as well.

Most collective bargaining ends up in a settlement. I have talked to many unions and they believe this happens because they always have a hammer, the option of a strike. We must reinvent the hammer. The new hammer, unless someone has a better idea, which I have not heard anyone bring forward, is final offer settlement arbitration; the very hammer the government used for the legislation to settle the Vancouver port strike in 1994.

When given the proper time to be dealt with, this tends to settle most if not all of the differences between the two parties. It then brings the parties as close as possible on all the remaining issues so that each party can get into the most reasonable position so that position will be selected during the final arbitration.

The government needs to carefully design legislation to deal with a new form of labour settlement. The loss we have experienced in this strike goes beyond the transportation industry and beyond the strike itself. There are many types of transportation that will be set up now that will shortcut our ports. They will get goods as quickly as possible across the border into the United States and be sent from there. There are also many ships that have now found that instead of dealing on the east coast of Canada they can deal more reliably on the east coast of the United States.

Rail unions and their companies, other companies, workers, farmers and Canadians have paid a very heavy price for this strike. Let it not be in vain.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to continue the debate on Bill C-77, the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act, 1995, in order to ensure the country is not deprived of vital rail services essential to the economic well-being of Canadians.

My riding of Windsor—St. Clair is the beginning of the Quebec—Windsor corridor, or the end depending which way you look at it. In Windsor we think it is the beginning.

Thursday night and Friday morning I was in Windsor. I went to the VIA rail station, to the CN yards and to the CP yards. I spoke to the people on the line. I spoke to the people who have been telephoning my office and who have been asking to return to work.

The Ford plant in Windsor was slowed down. The Ford plant in Talbotville just east of my riding was closed, all because of the rail strike. People in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada are out of work. People in Quebec are out of work. These people are out of work and the Leader of the Opposition stood here today and told us that suddenly he is filled with the milk of human kindness for collective bargaining.

Where was he on December 15, 1989? Where was he when the cabinet and Parliament enacted the Government Services

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Resumption Act? The parties were the Treasury Board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. The Leader of the Opposition was in the cabinet.

(1350)

There were two conciliation boards established and there were enforcement procedures, binding arbitration on the public sector. Where was the Leader of the Opposition?

[*Translation*]

The Leader of the Opposition was here. He voted yes to back to work legislation providing arbitration for public sector employees.

[*English*]

He was here. He voted yes and he put the public servants back to work. Where is he today? He is voting no. I ask why. All Canadians should ask why. The people of Quebec should ask why.

Could it be that he is trying to curry favour with the unions in Quebec? Could it be that he thinks they are so foolish, so naive, so stupid they will vote for separation because he turned his back on what he voted on in 1989? Could that be? I think not.

The people of Quebec who are out of work want to go back to work. The people in Windsor who are out of work want to go back to work. The people of Canada want to go back to work.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak for a few minutes on this very important matter. I want to say that Canada needs new labour relations and it needs a government capable of imposing leadership in this regard. Leadership in this regard means that it must establish that employers have rights, and so they do, but that employers must respect the rights of their employees.

In Quebec, we can say that we entered a new era of labour relations some ten years ago. This happened because we went through a major crisis and because employers and employees realized that they needed each other and that each had to respect the other so they could come to terms with the new economy.

The federal government could have shown the way today in this time of crisis, because this transformation in the economy is a time of crisis. It is showing the way backwards, back to a time before labour laws empowered workers to counterbalance this extremely powerful economic force ever so slightly.

We are entering an era where the economy seems to be the sole force. Only states, governments and parties would seem to be able to stop the relentless march of the force to globalize the economy that is sweeping everything in its path.

This is why we consider it so important right now for the government, for the government of this country we live in, to assume its responsibilities and affirm that there is more than just the economy. Yes, the economy is important, but people too are important and respect for people is important. It is true today for the unions, but tomorrow it will be true for individuals, who are not entitled to unionize or have no opportunity to do so; they too will be swept aside by the relentless advance of this force to globalize the economy.

People will have to stand up and let it be known that there is more than just the economy. The economy is important, but other things are important too.

The Minister of Labour had the opportunity to show that she considered the need for railways to be viable and competitive.

(1355)

But, at the same time, she could have given the judge the mandate of looking at what the workers had gained over the years and of trying to reach a balance, so that when the workers returned to work, when they started to look to their future, they would envision co-operation between them and management.

Instead, she gave one mandate: short and long term viability and competitiveness, while keeping good labour-management relations in mind. Anyone with any knowledge whatsoever of labour relations knows that giving such a mandate to a judge, who has the last say, constitutes a major change of course.

I am sad to see that, instead of giving workers a minimum guarantee in one of her first laws, the Minister of Labour chose to give in to the government's commercial and financial demands.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Lalonde: It is regrettable and deplorable. I think that Quebecers will also remember this when they have to make important choices regarding their future. They will remember that the woman the government chose to lead the referendum fight was forced to use strong-arm tactics, was put in a situation where she could not even choose to be impartial, which was what we expected her to be.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make, of course, regarding an event in ancient history, December 14, 1989. Let us go way back when, back to an era where the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean championed different causes than those he defends today.

On December 14, 1989, this House adopted Bill C-149, bringing public servants back to work.

An hon. member: Who did this?

Mr. Boudria: A Conservative government. Just look at what was forced on recalcitrant workers at the time: a fine of \$500 to

Government Orders

\$1,000 per day for each worker; \$10,000 to \$50,000 per day for union representatives; \$50,000 to \$100,000 per day for union bosses.

Would you like to know which parliamentarians voted for such draconian measures way back then? Here is the list of those who said yes to such a bill. The hon. member opposite knows all about voting yes. I will read off a few names: Atkinson, Beatty, Blackburn, Bosley, whoops! Bouchard, Lac-Saint-Jean. Just look what I discovered.

(1400)

The Speaker: The hon. chief whip for the government has only a few seconds left to conclude his remarks, after which we will allow the hon. member for Mercier to reply.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I had almost forgotten who exactly was responsible for imposing arbitration on public servants, with the same type of bill as this one. Who am I talking about? The Conservative members sitting at the time. And as I said a moment ago, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, in an earlier incarnation as a Conservative, also voted at that time in favour of similar measures.

I would ask the member opposite what brought about this sudden conversion of the member for Lac-Saint-Jean. Perhaps she can explain to us the virtue by which the member for Lac-Saint-Jean and his colleagues are now possessed, but by which it seems they were not troubled on December 14, 1989?

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I believe that at that time the hon. members opposite had voted against this measure. I also believe that, when they were elected, they gave not the slightest indication that if this sort of situation arose this is what they would do.

As for the reasons behind the evolution of the Leader of the Opposition, I can tell you that I know, and he has said so himself, that he has evolved in many areas, and that he has no problem defending himself.

And I know that those members who are now laughing promised not to do what they are doing. And they are supposed to be "liberals".

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

The Speaker: In keeping with the letter and spirit of the law, the hon. member has approximately 90 seconds. The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to state the case in one question for the hon. member for Mercier.

We are discussing back to work legislation for the purpose of protecting a third party which is being injured, the exporters, the shippers. What has happened in this House is that the Bloc Quebecois has attempted to move the discussion into the future

of collective bargaining. No one is talking about that. That is not the purpose of this debate.

We are not saying it should be done away with. All the Reform Party has said and what we are saying in this debate is that a third party is being injured. The Leader of the Official Opposition did not mention and was not even concerned about the economy or the exporters and farmers, the people who are being hurt. He was not one bit concerned.

It is time for the Bloc Quebecois members to admit whether they are concerned in the least about the third party we are talking about here, the people who are being injured, and Canada's broad economy. They are being injured by this delay, this nonsense and politics which are going on by the Bloc Quebecois.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I have two things to say. The first is that in life as in labour relations everyone finds himself at one time or another in the role of third party. Let me tell you a story.

One day I picked up a worker who was furious because the subway was not running outside peak hours, because in Quebec we have essential services during a strike. This health worker said to me: "I hope this is over soon. When we go on strike, people want to see us back at work as quickly as possible". We are always the third party in somebody's eyes. It is important that we remember this when it comes to labour relations. That is my first reply.

My second is that there should be an anti-strikebreaking law in Canada because 75 per cent of workers in other Canadian provinces are covered by one.

And thirdly—

[*English*]

If the Canadian economy cannot afford the Canada Labour Code, then there is a problem. The government should say so and do something about it.

The Speaker: It being 2.03 p.m., pursuant to the order made Saturday, March 25, 1995, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Government Orders

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 184)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Arseneault	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Bélair
Bélanger	Calder
Campbell	Catterall
Chan	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clancy	Cohen
Collenette	Collins
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
DeVillers	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Easter	English
Flis	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Galloway
Gerrard	Godfrey
Gouk	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Hanrahan
Hart	Hickey
Hoeppner	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jordan	Keyes
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLaren	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McTeague
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Nault
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Payne	Penson
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Richardson
Rideout	Ringma
Robichaud	Robillard
Rock	Rompkey
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd	Sheridan
Skoke	Speaker
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Thompson	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Wells	Whelan
Young —137	

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Members

Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bouchard
Bélisle	Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Davault	Debien
de Savoye	Dubé
Duceppe	Dumas
Fillion	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Roberval)	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Jacob	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
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Anderson	Bellemare
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien	Canuel
Chamberlain	Dalphoné-Guiral
Deshaies	Gaffney
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	Marchand
Peric	Peterson
Sauvageau	Zed

(1425)

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I wonder if you might seek consent that we suspend the sitting of the House now until the royal assent, which we anticipate later this day, on the understanding that the House would reconvene only for the purpose of attending for the royal assent. The House would adjourn immediately thereafter until tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, before giving consent, I would like to speak to the motion, as we are allowed to do at this stage on motions such as this one.

(1430)

The Speaker: With unanimous consent, we can do anything we please in this House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Roberval has the floor.

Government Orders

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to speak, he will have to deal with the motion we will be moving in this House. I suggest therefore that the Orders of the Day be called.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I did call Orders of the Day. I was looking for unanimous consent to the motion put forward by the member. I am going to ask once again.

A motion was put forward by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands asking for unanimous consent. Did I misunderstand? That is the motion that I put to the House. It is very simple. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, we just finished giving third reading to this bill providing for the resumption of work by rail workers.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I see I am going to have to put the motion first, if the hon. secretary of state will excuse me.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, immediately following the adoption of this Order, the sitting shall be suspended and shall be reconvened for the sole purpose of attending a Royal Assent;

Provided that, immediately upon return from the said Royal Assent, the House shall be adjourned to the next sitting day;

Provided that if the House has not been reconvened for the purpose of attending a Royal Assent by 10 a.m. on Monday, March 27, 1995, it shall, at that time, be reconvened for the sole purpose of being adjourned until 11 a.m. March 27, 1995.

[*Translation*]

He said: The purpose of this motion is to suspend the sitting of the House while the other place passes this bill and ensure that, by tomorrow, railway operations will have resumed in our country, so that, for instance, the people from the suburbs of Montreal who commute by train can do so tomorrow.

The other day, the Leader of the Opposition congratulated the Minister of Labour on having resolved the conflict in the port of Montreal. But now the port of Montreal is cluttered with containers and, if trains could get rolling as soon as possible, they could be shipped out. This way, factories would get the parts they need and workers could keep working.

That is why, for the last time, we ask the opposition to give consent to suspending the sitting of the House to allow this legislation to be enacted today and railway operations to resume tomorrow. I know that my colleague, the House leader of the opposition wishes to speak, but I hope that after he has done so, the sitting of the House can be suspended to ensure that this legislation be given royal assent before the day is over.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Members opposite have no need to worry about my wish to speak to this motion, Mr. Speaker. I have no intention of beating, or even getting close to, the recent parliamentary record for the longest speech on a motion, which was set by the current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in the last Parliament when he spoke for three hours on a fisheries bill. Despite the Deputy Prime Minister's invitation, I have no intention of beating this time record, far from it.

Some matters must be clarified before we agree to adjourn.

(1435)

Last Monday, when the government and the opposition faced off on the rail transportation problem, we had no idea that we would sit until today, Sunday, before solving this serious problem. We were prepared from the first and sincerely believed that it was possible to settle this matter very quickly with a minimum of co-operation.

This past week was certainly not democracy week in Canada's Parliament. In fact, the government set parliamentary rules aside four times in order to pass this bill. This week, they set aside the rights of CN workers as well as the very rule of free collective bargaining in Canada. This was certainly not the most glorious week for the government and the new Minister of Labour.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: This was neither democracy week nor a very good week for the Minister of Labour, who will go down in history as the ultimate trigger-happy minister, who rejected all the recommendations in the conciliator's report, who refused to discuss the matter with the opposition, who refused to keep an open mind in this debate, who refused to co-operate with the people on this side in order to settle the labour dispute.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: During this debate, and particularly at third reading, members opposite referred to previous debates during which the Leader of the Opposition or other members may have held different views. But we are quite comfortable with that. After all, let us not forget that the Prime Minister and leader of this government fought tooth and nail against free trade, leading an extraordinary charge which lasted for months and which was also part of his leadership campaign. Back then, all the members opposite were against free trade, whereas today they extoll the virtues of NAFTA.

Government Orders

If the Liberals want to talk about changing one's views, that is fine with us. Remember when they lambasted the previous Conservative government for making cuts to the UI program. Canadians and Quebecers are not stupid. The Liberals blasted the Conservative government regarding these changes to the UI program. Yet, as soon as they took office, the Liberals set out to do twice as much damage as the previous government had done.

Before adjourning, let us remember how hard these Liberals fought to protect social housing in Canada. Now that they form the government, they cut all the budgets for social housing. These are the people we are dealing with, across the floor.

We, as well as Canadian and Quebec workers, will remember the Minister of Labour and her government, which imposed four special motions to suspend the normal rules of Parliament. The first one, on Wednesday, March 22, 1995, was a time allocation motion limiting to one hour the debate at second reading. For those who are listening to us, the debate at second reading consists in examining the principle underlying the bill.

(1440)

When we are preparing to change the rules of the labour relations game, following the conciliator's report, it seems rather presumptuous to us, to say the least, not to allow Parliament to speak for at least a few hours on the principle of this bill. Only one hour to discuss the principle of the bill.

Secondly, on March 22 as well, a second motion on the allocation of time, unheard of in Canadian Parliament, limiting the work of the committee to four hours. Why? Why not allow the committee a few hours to discuss the bill as a whole? It had only four hours and was obliged to stop its deliberations at 9 p.m., when it could easily have carried on until 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.

This is the strongest evidence that the government and the Minister of Labour never had the intention of listening to what the opposition had to say.

At 10 a.m., on Thursday March 23, even before the House began its proceedings, with no discussion between the government and the office of the Opposition House Leader and without any prior negotiations, the government decided, by tabling a particular motion here in this House, that we would sit Saturday and Sunday. It was not the opposition that decided this. It was at the government's request, and it is in the Hansard.

A fourth time allocation motion, on Saturday, March 26, again limited the work of the House, this time to three hours. How in all seriousness can they have so little respect for workers' rights? How can they not want to listen for one second to what duly elected members want to say to the government? At no time, it must be said, did the opposition take a stand outside the rules of Parliament. We simply refused to suspend the rules

of this House. We wanted the debate to take place in the same way as most, if not all, parliamentary debates, that is, through the normal process of discussion.

At no time did I ever say to the government, to the press or to the electronic media that we wanted to filibuster this bill. On the contrary, I have always reminded the government and citizens that the opposition realizes that we have to resolve the railway dispute quickly yet responsibly and without contravening parliamentary rules, in order to avoid the economic problems associated with a lingering dispute.

Although there was no indication whatsoever that we wanted to delay the work, no indication whatsoever that we wanted to put the bill off until later, the government decided to introduce no less than four special motions, one of which, need I remind the House, was to sit Saturday and Sunday.

I was surprised. I was disappointed yesterday when the hon. government whip said that this was something absolutely unusual and wrong, and that we should not be sitting Saturday and Sunday, because it costs \$17,000 an hour to run Parliament, and a little more to do it on Sunday. As if democracy did not warrant Parliament's decision to run as long as it sees fit, as long as it takes to solve problems affecting the citizens of this country.

It is utterly unacceptable that a debate on a point as basic as the right to strike or the right of workers to have their say on the issue comes down to a question of how many thousands of dollars it costs an hour.

(1445)

As for the Deputy Prime Minister, she called members of the opposition stupid—what gall—because we talked about workers' rights. I have never seen such a thing. In the eight and a half years that I have been a parliamentarian, this is the first time that I have seen a Deputy Prime Minister stoop to so low an insult in describing the attitude of the opposition, which never did any filibustering, but merely wanted to ensure that parliamentary rules, the rules imposed on us by members opposite, were respected.

Mr. Loubier: Insult is the weapon of the people.

Mr. Gauthier: Before agreeing to let the House adjourn, I just wish to remind you and the population that, during the debate on this matter, the Minister of Labour refused to make the slightest concession allowing the workers not to disrupt rail transportation but to return to work and be heard. As even the conciliator admitted, the workers were not given the opportunity to be heard.

We asked the government to give the workers a chance to be heard by imposing a return to work. We agree that they should go back to work, but they should be given a chance to be heard without the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. The Minister of Labour rejected this minimum demand by the

Government Orders

opposition, which would have allowed us to settle the whole dispute as early as Monday.

Do not forget that, instead of agreeing to or discussing this demand, the Minister of Labour and the government adopted a hammer-like approach in conducting parliamentary proceedings this week. This is not democracy week; it is a record for a new minister recently elected to this Parliament to flout parliamentary rules four times in order to speed up debate and settle this matter as quickly as possible without any respect whatsoever for those involved.

Furthermore, I would remind you that the Minister of Labour made a statement in this House which was quite surprising, coming as it did from a new member of Parliament who, we personally believed, wanted to advance labour relations. On March 22, the Minister of Labour said this:

Let us be realistic: Kruger is closed, while Bécancour, Alcan and Petromont are in the process of shutting down. Let us do something, Mr. Speaker.

That is what the Minister of Labour said. Are those the words of a serious-minded person? Who would make such alarmist remarks, when Alcan never ceased operating, Bécancour never shut down, Kruger was closed for no more than 24 hours and Petromont remained open? Is it the responsible thing to do for a government minister to use scare tactics to settle a dispute?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Not only is this minister the bludgeon minister, but she is the minister of economic terrorism. This gives a good idea of what to expect in the Quebec referendum debate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Imagine the Quebec referendum debate, in which she is supposed to represent this government. She was called in because the government wanted to have a credible spokesperson in Quebec. No sooner is she in that her first move as Minister of Labour is to violate the rights of the workers. How so? Through economic terrorism.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, we cannot suspend the sitting of this House without first giving the people of Quebec this piece of advice: remember what the Minister of Labour did. Workers, whether unionized or not, do not forget how she handled her first labour relations assignment. Remember how she tried to scare people. Remember her arguments, arguments that turned out to be untrue. Remember that the Minister of Labour is to blame for the worst week we have gone through since we were elected to this Parliament.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

(1450)

[English]

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party and my colleagues here today support the motion before us because we want to get on with the job. We want this to move to the Senate and we want to have royal assent today. That is the responsible thing to do at this time.

I also want to talk about democracy. The House leader for the Bloc Québécois tries to epitomize democracy in the House. If members listen very carefully they will see his definition of democracy. One moment he talks about being for the worker. The next moment he talks about fighting for the economy of Canada. The next moment he is saying something about management. Very soon he is talking about the responsibilities of the Minister of Labour and how she should be involved.

He is all over the place. I cannot understand any kind of definition of democracy in these guttural utterances. It is a delaying tactic in dealing with some very important legislation before us that must move to the other place.

I would like to say to the Bloc Québécois that democracy is representing those who need representation in an emergency situation. This is demonstrated by the legislation before us.

We have had a group of people who needed immediate representation. There are the shippers, the exporters, the farmers and a number of other people who are innocent third parties who cannot be involved in the collective bargaining process. They are in need of representation in a democracy so that they have equal opportunity. What we have done in moving third reading is say those people are going to be represented in our system and are not going to be injured in any way. It is time to recognize that is an important aspect in this democratic process.

On that basis we urge the support for the motion before us, that the House rises until the call of the Chair, that we resume and give royal assent so that tomorrow the transportation system is operating and taking its rightful responsibility.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: Is it the wish of the House to suspend the sitting to the call of the Chair?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2.55 p.m.)

The Royal Assent

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.15 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed certain bills, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

THE ROYAL ASSENT*[English]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall

March 26, 1995

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Antonio Lamer, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Attorney General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the 26th day of March, 1995, at 5.15 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to several bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony P. Smyth,
Deputy Secretary, Policy, Program and Protocol

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

*[Translation]**And being returned:*

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following bills:

Bill C-59, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Application Rules—Chapter 3.

Bill C-60, An Act respecting an agreement between Her Majesty in right of Canada and the Pictou Landing Indian Band—Chapter 4.

Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act and to make related amendments to other Acts—Chapter 5.

Bill C-77, An Act to provide for the maintenance of railway operations and subsidiary services—Chapter 6.

Bill C-216, An Act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act—Chapter 7.

It being 5.32 p.m. the House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

(The House adjourned at 5.32 p.m.)

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