

the priorities which have been established by these governments. It should be borne in mind that statements have been made by other provincial and party leaders on other aspects of the talks. This process is not unexpected. The information is known to the government.

Senator Balfour: As a final supplementary, would the leader tell us if the government agrees with the sentiments expressed by Premier Blakeney and if it still expects resolution of the oil-pricing situation before the existing agreement expires on July 1?

Senator Perrault: I think the honourable senator is aware that strenuous efforts have been made by representatives of the federal government to achieve some agreement with respect to oil pricing. Those efforts are continuing and will continue during the weeks to come. Hopefully this matter can be resolved in advance of the September meeting of first ministers.

AIRLINES

APPLICATION OF EASTERN PROVINCIAL AIRWAYS TO EXTEND SERVICES

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, my question relates to the air service between Halifax and Toronto sought by Eastern Provincial Airways. An appeal was launched to the cabinet not long ago. I base my question on a remark attributed to the Minister of Transport the other day, to the effect that there are people in the maritimes who prefer the CP service. I should like to say, as a preamble to my question, that there are some, a few, in that category, and I would also say, "Shame on them."

I would ask the Leader of the Government to bear in mind the importance and significance of EPA to the total Atlantic economy, especially Prince Edward Island. Can he give us an indication when the cabinet may be acting upon the very important appeal for the reversal of a very wrong decision?

• (1410)

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, first of all, may I say that in the view of most Canadians who are well served by the air carriers of this nation, including Air Canada, CP Air and Eastern Provincial Airways, these are three good airlines. There are many others in this country. Secondly, may I say that the question of routes in Atlantic Canada, and connections to Toronto, has been of active interest to many members of cabinet. Discussions have been held during the past week. I personally, as a government minister, have been involved in meetings with both Canadian Pacific and EPA, and I think that a useful solution is going to be found to this particular problem.

THE CONSTITUTION

ASPECTS OF SENATE STUDY

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, I would like to direct a question to the Leader of the Government. My

question is based on item number four on the order paper, the motion made by the Honourable Senator Lamontagne, and the amendment made by the Honourable Senator Flynn. The Task Force on Canadian Unity listed seven functions of a second chamber, and then went on to state that this chamber has failed in all except the first two. Would the leader consider having the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs study this aspect, and then report back? In the meantime the motion of Senator Lamontagne and the amendment of Senator Flynn could be held in abeyance. I think it would help both sides of the debate if this study were carried out first.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators may wish to reconstitute that committee, to complete its report or investigate other aspects of constitutional reform. It is not for the Leader of the Government in the Senate to dictate or direct that that activity be undertaken.

Senator Flynn: Did you say that without a smile?

POST OFFICE

REQUEST BY LETTER CARRIERS UNION TO RENEGOTIATE CONTRACT

Hon. C. William Doody: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government. In the light of the answer that the minister kindly provided yesterday, relative to my previous question on the settlement with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, I wonder if the minister would inform the Senate as to what the government's plans are in response to the request of the Letter Carriers Union, who have asked that their contract be reopened in view of the settlement with the inside workers. I recognize that the working environment is somewhat different, as the minister pointed out yesterday, but nonetheless the letter carriers feel they have a legitimate grievance in this connection.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it would be unwise and unfair for me to offer an opinion on a looming negotiation when the facts are not before me and when the rationale for any settlement has not been spelled out to the interested parties.

Senator Doody: I gather, then, from the answer of the minister, that there is in fact a set of negotiations looming, which means that the contract will be reopened.

The others who seem to be particularly concerned with this situation—and this arises out of a question that I asked prior to today—are the supervisors. There are some four thousand plus supervisors, who apparently feel that the settlement they have received gives them lesser benefits than those of the people they supervise. As I asked earlier, how do we expect these supervisors to see that forty hours of work is done in a 37½ hour week if the people they are supervising will be getting greater benefits than they? Is it the intention of the government to reopen their contract as well?

Senator Perrault: The question will be taken as notice.