

*Labour Dispute at Montreal*

report. Far from saying that the minister or the government are adverse to interfering, I say I am still prepared to appoint an arbitrator if both sides will agree.

• (3:20 p.m.)

If there were no collective agreement in force and they were still in the course of negotiating, then I could act under the statute. I could move in arbitrarily without permission. I could appoint a conciliator. In this case I might even send in a mediator, but in view of the lines that have been drawn and the points that need clarification, unless he had some authority to make binding arbitrary decisions—and I did only suggest that his authority extend to December 31 of this year—there would be very little hope of finding a solution to the problem. The only other course I can think of would be to ask parliament to deal with the matter by legislation and then appoint an administrator to run the docks at Montreal in the same way as the former government appointed an administrator to run the ferry boats on the west coast six or seven years ago.

They are the courses that are open, Mr. Speaker. However, as I said yesterday, there are today in effect binding agreements between both parties. Both parties have not only provided remedies for grievances, settling them by arbitration according to the agreements, but they also have the right to resort to the courts. The employers have said—and again I am not saying whether they are right or wrong—that they are only getting 50 per cent productivity, that they want a dollar's worth of work for a dollar's pay, not 50 cents worth of work. They have also said that if they do not get the right type of personnel they will not accept them. After all, as they point out, they are management and have responsibilities as such.

If this is wrong, Mr. Speaker, then resort could have been had to the courts two weeks ago. But no resort to the courts was had until I made the statement yesterday that these people must learn to do something for themselves instead of asking parliament to intervene every time a situation of this kind develops. It is about time people realized this. We do have a responsibility as a government, yes. Members of parliament also have a responsibility. Knowing what this stoppage is doing to the future livelihood of these people and the reputation of the port of Montreal, and despite the imposition of surcharges to take care of added costs, no resort was had to the courts until after my statement yesterday

that they should rely on what they agreed upon themselves in solemn contract a few months ago.

Some questions were asked by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand). He said that an interpretation of the Picard report was needed, but I think I have dealt with that as fully as I need.

There may be some points which require clarification. In my opinion the best way to deal with these questions, if the parties do not want to take the time involved in going to the courts and embarking upon expensive litigation, is to accept my offer to appoint an arbitrator. I therefore repeat that offer now. I will appoint either a port controller or an arbitrator if the parties give him some tools to work with and not tie his hands before he commences.

The hon. member for Kamloops suggested that the government or the Minister of Labour—one or the other—has a particular responsibility to see that the conclusions reached by the Picard report are carried out. I agree that perhaps we have a greater responsibility here. But again I go back to what I said in my opening remarks namely, that the parties entered into these agreements and signed them only a few months ago some time after Professor Picard went to work. They therefore knew he would be submitting a report and they would be bound by it.

Why should not the parties be encouraged to use the remedies provided in the agreements they signed and go to the courts or proceed to arbitration? I will do everything I can to help them, but I do not think they should ask me to get down on my knees any more than I have already. I feel that I have gone about as far as I can. I have pleaded with them. Some reason must be shown, and I think the pressure should come from the people whose shipments are involved, such as the exporters, or the longshoremen and the shipping companies. Let the parties use some common sense. If they wish I will very gladly move in and do what I can but they must co-operate.

There is one point that I do not think should go unanswered. The hon. member for Mégantic (Mr. Langlois) said there were no members on the government side from Montreal present during this debate. I should like to point out that throughout the whole debate my colleague the Minister of Industry (Mr.