

in charge of the situation, and what action is the government taking in an attempt to bring both parties to the bargaining table?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was discussing this matter this morning with my colleague the Minister of Transport, who can speak to the safety regulations part of the question, and perhaps the Acting Minister of Labour may also want to say something.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have arranged for the head of the steamship inspection service, Captain Harrison, to reconvene the meetings on safety, and these were recommenced this morning. As far as I am aware a meeting is being held as of this moment, and I have instructed him to keep on with the meetings throughout the weekend, if necessary, or for as long as anything productive and fruitful comes from them.

Mr. Winch: Are they in Ottawa or Vancouver?

Mr. Jamieson: The meetings are being held in Vancouver. When they have reached the point where there is a possibility of making a definitive statement with regard to those matters upon which there is general agreement, I will see that this is publicized immediately. In the interim I can assure the House, as I have already assured the towboat owners and the Merchant Seamen's Guild, first of all that it is our intention to strengthen the regulations significantly and, second, that it is also our intention to ensure that there is an on-going program to make certain that these regulations are lived up to by the towboat owners.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the fact that this committee dealing with safety regulations has met frequently and no conclusions have been reached, may I ask the minister whether he is prepared to take action on his own, if the present meeting does not succeed in bringing about a settlement, in order that this matter may be brought to a head?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I would have to quarrel just slightly with the statement that no conclusions have been reached. I think a good many have been reached, but these specific ones have not been published, and will not be until the whole question has been resolved. So I think that considerable progress

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Inquiries of the Ministry

has been made, and I also understand that the climate of the current meetings is most encouraging.

So far as making a unilateral statement is concerned, in the last analysis, of course, that is what I would have to do. While these are consultative meetings dealing with regulations, I am sure that the hon. member and the House will agree with me that in the last analysis we will have to determine what is a suitable situation. Therefore, in the unhappy event that the talks are not productive to the point where I can accept the recommendations, I assure the House and the hon. member that I will do exactly what he has said.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. Could the minister indicate for how long he will allow these talks to continue before he comes to the point where he will impose regulations by Order in Council in the normal way?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, what I told Captain Harrison was that he should continue the talks without interruption, that is, in terms of days in between, for as long as he feels he is making progress. In other words, if there is obvious evidence that the parties are coming together then he should continue talking but that he should advise me at the earliest possible moment when he feels that no further productive results will come from the talks.

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

EFFECT OF APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF TASK FORCE

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Agriculture a question.

In view of the fact that the federal task force on agriculture recommends the discontinuance of all forms of subsidies in respect of agricultural products, can the minister give us the assurance that this measure will only be considered after implementation of a policy designed to enable farmers who must leave the farm to secure new employment?

[English]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think there are several hundred recommendations in the task force