

RAILWAY STATISTICS

Question No. 1,159—**Mr. Grégoire:**

1. What is the total number of miles of track owned in each of the provinces of Canada by (a) the Canadian National Railways (b) the Canadian Pacific Railway?

2. What investments have been made by the government in each province for railway transportation, with regard to (a) the Canadian National Railways (b) the Canadian Pacific Railway?

3. What is the volume, and also the value, of the merchandise transported by rail in each province during the last 10 years?

4. In the province of Quebec (a) what capital investments have been made by the federal government for railway transportation (b) what is the total number of miles of track in each economic area?

Return tabled.

FEDERAL RIDINGS IN QUEBEC

Question No. 1,406—**Mr. Langlois (Megantic):**

What is the population and the area of each federal riding in the province of Quebec?

Return tabled.

LABOUR RELATIONS

QUEBEC—STOPPAGE OF WORK BY
LONGSHOREMEN

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour in connection with the longshoremen's strike on the St. Lawrence and the calamitous potentialities of that strike. Has the minister received a suggestion that he should intervene personally; what has he done in that connection, and what are the hopes for a settlement before the results reach the point where they can only be detrimental not only to the export trade in general but to wheat deliveries in particular?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the minister has received more than one suggestion that he might intervene. I might say that I, as minister, was very disturbed to learn on Friday that one of the parties to the conciliation proceedings which opened on Thursday had withdrawn from the negotiating table on the ground, which they put forward, that the strike was a wildcat strike and therefore illegal.

Personally, after discussion with my officers and some of my colleagues, I feel this is a most unfortunate development. The chairman of the conciliation board let it be known that

Inquiries of the Ministry

the board would sit again today at 2.30 p.m. or shortly thereafter. I am still awaiting a report as to what I hope might have happened this afternoon, at 2.30. The minister is quite prepared to take his part in the negotiations if he feels that is necessary or desirable. I am hopeful that reason will prevail at today's meeting, in view of telegrams from representatives not only of the federation but of the unions concerned, and that they will get down to brass tacks later today.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I assume that the one party to which the minister has referred is the shipowners or employers. Has he communicated with them, and does he have any assurance that when Mr. Justice Prevost meets this afternoon as conciliator they will be present? What pressure or suggestion has been exerted by the minister or his officials on the employers or shipowners to get them to view this as a national matter rather than one which only affects them?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of giving a prolonged answer perhaps I might read a copy of the telegram I sent to the shipowners on Friday evening. It was sent to the president of the shipping federation, and reads as follows:

It would appear that by the time I had an opportunity to consider your telegram today you had already advised the board of conciliation that you could not proceed with its hearings until the longshoremen obeyed the law and returned to work. I regret very much that the position of your federation may have the effect of preventing the critical negotiations before the board that are essential to a settlement of the dispute. Would urge that you facilitate arrangements for the conciliation board to meet over Saturday and Sunday, which are non-working days, without prejudice to your position on Monday. It is in the national interest as well as that of the members of your shipping federation that every effort be made to settle this dispute at the earliest time.

I am still waiting to find out what reaction there may have been when the conciliation board resumes this afternoon.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, would the minister put on record the telegram he received and to which he made reference?

Mr. Nicholson: I will be very glad to table the telegrams, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is that suggestion agreeable?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct