

*Labour Dispute at Montreal*

The point I am trying to get at as a Montrealer is that the economy of the region, the province and the nation is such that we cannot afford the luxury of a work shutdown in the ports of Montreal, Vancouver, Three Rivers, Quebec or anywhere else in Canada. We must find ways and means to stabilize and continue peaceful negotiations between management and labour. The first practical, tangible and progressive step toward the eventual day when strikes will be obsolete and accepted as obsolete by both sides at the bargaining table is the Picard report, particularly when accepted by labour and management.

Labour must realize that Bill C-215 granted very substantial increases in wages. We have been criticized from all parts of the house and by private enterprise about the generosity of that settlement which has been erroneously interpreted as a forced settlement by the Prime Minister. That is not the case. An increase in the wages of employees on the waterfront of 35 per cent or 40 per cent would be insignificant to the ship owners provided the workers in turn would increase productivity in the port of Montreal, which is now far less than the productivity of other ports in Canada.

Labour must face up to these indisputable facts. If labour refuses to go along with the spirit of the Picard report because of a genuine misunderstanding of certain clauses, I suggest it would be better for them to carry on during the few remaining weeks until the port closes, under protest if necessary. Surely labour has a moral obligation to the port and the people using it who are not directly involved as management or labour in this dispute.

At the risk of being discourteous, Mr. Minister, I suggest that you should contact Mr. Picard and get him to cut his holiday short, come back and give us the benefit of his advice. That is my first suggestion.

**Mr. Nicholson:** The unions have said they will not agree to that course.

**Mr. Mackasey:** I do not care whether the unions accept it. Mr. Picard should make his report so clear that whether or not the unions accept it there would be no difference in the opinion of the parties as to what the report is all about. If the unions did not accept it then they would be failing the spirit of Bill C-215 and accepting a pay increase under false pretenses.

[Mr. Mackasey.]

There is ambiguity in the report. Let me point to the one portion regarding slings and the size of slings. Mr. Picard uses the word "reasonable". What is reasonable to the unions might be one thing but yet another to management. Management may feel that "reasonable" means all the weight that the slings and cranes can carry, but labour may suggest that this would reach the point where the operation is no longer safe or the point at which management was asking labour to triple productivity rather than double it. In any event I think Professor Picard has an obligation to come back and clarify these points. Once these points are clarified I think labour and management have an obligation to sit down together and thrash out their differences under the provisions of the bill.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Unfortunately they do not look at it that way or agree—

**Mr. Mackasey:** I do not intend to become involved in a dispute with my minister, and that is why I said I was speaking as a member from the Montreal area who believes we cannot afford the luxury of shutting down the port of Montreal. That is my first point. The second point is that if the shutdown is the result of a genuine misunderstanding of certain parts of the Picard report, then Mr. Picard should clarify its contents and make very clear to labour and management precisely what he meant by words such as "reasonable". After that is done management and labour should show good faith and, under the provisions of the Canada Labour (Standards) Code and the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, should appeal to the minister's department for assistance in bringing their dispute to an end. If they do not they will wake up one day to the fact that the port of Montreal has become obsolete. Ship owners will find they have to go elsewhere to find facilities similar to those in Montreal, which I think are unmatched anywhere in the world.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif):** Is the house ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif):** Mr. Ricard, seconded by Mr. Starr, moves that the house do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Carried.

**Some hon. Members:** No.