

Labour Dispute at Montreal

of the longshoremen's strike in British Columbia, last year, but that is not at all what I did. I simply asked that we consider at the same time the opening of the ports on the St. Lawrence—

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a question of privilege.

Mr. Grégoire: It most certainly is a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Nicholson: I did not interrupt the hon. member when he spoke this morning. He was referring to irresponsibility. I repeat that he was irresponsible on that occasion. Millions of dollars worth of perishable goods were being lost and he refused unanimous consent to enable the introduction of legislation which would have put an end to that situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, I rise again on a question of privilege. I have just told the minister that I never did that. Yet, he still imputes to me motives I never had or ascribes to me statements I never made, and I think that justifies me in raising the question of privilege. I told him that I did not delay that debate, that I simply asked that we consider at the same time the opening of the ports on the St. Lawrence. That is not the same thing.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Labour.

Mr. McIntosh: May I ask the minister a question before he leaves this matter of perishable goods? As I mentioned before, I know very little about the dispute between management and labour. The minister just finished saying he never hesitated—

Mr. Byrne: Would you know a rotten apple when you saw it?

Mr. McIntosh: The minister has just said he never hesitated to move in when an innocent party was affected. I fail to see the difference between this dispute and the earlier dispute. Millions of dollars worth of perishable goods are being affected by this dispute, as the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) pointed out.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are not in committee and the minister has the floor.

[Mr. Grégoire.]

Mr. McIntosh: Perhaps he would explain that point.

Mr. Nicholson: I would be glad to deal with it. I said I had no hesitation in moving in, and I did move in here. I have requested the persons involved in this dispute to give priority to perishable goods and commodities of value. I have been assured that priority has been given to the shipment of fruit and other perishable products. My colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) will be dealing with that phase of the subject later today. On one occasion I made a special trip to Montreal to plead with them for action on perishable and special goods.

Mr. McIntosh: What about wheat?

Mr. Nicholson: I do not believe we face the same problem in connection with wheat because wheat is handled in bulk quantities and not by longshoremen to any great extent.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to bring to the attention of the house the fact that the minister's time has expired, unless he is given unanimous consent to continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nicholson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the members of the house. The Minister of Agriculture will deal with the wheat aspect in greater detail. However, I do appreciate the hon. member having raised the question. The Minister of Agriculture will deal also with the comments made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North and the hon. member for Kamloops.

A suggestion was made that the Picard report is not acceptable to either side. This statement was made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North. I can only repeat that, according to public statements made by both sides, the Picard report is acceptable to them. It is a question of the interpretation of parts of the report and not the report itself. I am not saying that perhaps some of the actions of the companies have not been hasty because when tensions are high people do things for which they are sorry later. I am not holding a particular brief for one side or the other, but I am putting forward the reasons, in response to a question asked by the hon. member for Ontario why the shipping federation and the stevedoring companies would not agree to arbitration. I have had no direct answer to that, although the unions did say they would not agree to have Dr. Picard come forward and interpret the