

*Adjournment Debate*

Yesterday I first tried to find out from him whether he thought the damage to the total economy caused by this dispute between labour and management was of such magnitude that we could allow the dispute to continue. It seems to me, and to most reasonable Canadians, that the dispute between labour and management is not great enough to allow the total number of ports on the west coast to be shut down. I think most people would agree with that.

I also tried to find out what the Minister intended to do, and how long it would take before the Government assumed its responsibility, stepping in and ensuring that these ports export those commodities produced in this country to which the Hon. Member who spoke previously referred. I received no real response from him.

It was interesting to me that less than an hour later the Minister of Finance stated in his speech, which was really a budget speech, whether he wants to admit it or not, that if the parties did not resolve their differences by Monday, the Government would accept its responsibility. By that, I assume he meant that the Government is prepared to step in and consider back to work legislation.

Let me briefly refer to what is being offered to the longshoreman on the west coast. We have gone through the labour-management negotiations. The Allan Hope report recommended that on top of an hourly base-rate of \$12.55, there be an additional increase in the first year of \$1.60 an hour and \$1.55 an hour in the second year. That seems to be extremely generous because it is more than 12 per cent or more than twice the six and five to which the Government is referring in the first year, and the same in the second year. It is in the order of 13 per cent or 14 per cent in the first year and slightly less than that in the second year. I fail to see why, if the Government is serious about its six and five program, it would have any hesitation at all about stepping in and imposing a settlement, if that were the last recourse, on the basis of the conciliation report. There should be no concern there, based on the Government's six and five program.

● (2205)

The other thing that the Government is playing with and playing with very seriously is Canada's international reputation as a reliable supplier of raw materials. We have a record grain crop on the prairies in terms of quantity. Over the past two or three years we have managed to build up a somewhat tarnished reputation as a reliable supplier of grain. We must look after our customers in terms of things we can do; solving the man-made problems. We know we cannot predict, or do very much about, bad weather, mud slides and snow slides which shut off rail passage to the west coast. We know these are going to cause problems and there is nothing we can do about them. However, we can do something about the man-made problems; and that is what we face.

I see the parliamentary secretary here this evening. He is listening. I hope he will respond in a somewhat positive fashion to the suggestions I am going to make.

The Government should, first, step in and the Minister of Labour should personally become involved and see these are meaningful negotiations. Second, when the negotiations are going on, the people should go back to work. There would be nothing wrong with that. It would indicate goodwill on both sides. We would then be earning the much needed export dollars we so desperately need. The west coast ports would be adding to employment in this country instead of causing additional unemployment at a time when we cannot afford one more Canadian out of work. It is already going to be a long cold out-of-work winter for too many Canadians.

**Mr. Antonio Yanakis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) for his very interesting question. I think it would be very useful if I briefly outlined the chronology of events to date in the dispute.

The dispute concerns renewal of a collective agreement which expired on December 31, 1981 covering some 3,500 longshoremen in various ports on the west coast. The parties to the dispute, the British Columbia Maritime Employers' Association and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (Canadian Area) met in direct negotiations over a period of some three months without reaching agreement on a new contract.

The Minister subsequently appointed a conciliation officer to assist the parties, but his efforts were unsuccessful. On March 3, 1982 he appointed Mr. Allan Hope, Q.C. of Prince George, B.C. as conciliation commissioner in the dispute.

Mr. Hope was initially successful in bringing the parties back to the bargaining table for direct negotiations, but he too was unsuccessful in assisting the parties in resolving their differences. He subsequently filed his final report with the Minister and it was released to the parties on August 13.

The BCMEA indicated that they were prepared to accept the recommendations of the conciliation commissioner as the basis for a new collective agreement, but the ILMU rejected the total report as an unacceptable package, at the same time indicating a willingness to negotiate further on those items where it was not prepared to accept the conciliation commissioner's recommendations.

● (2210)

The parties acquired the legal right to strike or lockout on August 21, 1982. Since that time, the parties have met several times in direct negotiations with little progress being made towards a final settlement. The union held a series of one-day port closures to conduct informational sessions for their people and in addition, instituted what they termed a "work-monitoring program" which effectively slowed the unloading and loading of ships to the point where several major shipping consortia began diverting their vessels from Vancouver to the Port of Seattle. This situation culminated with the BCMEA locking out the longshoremen on October 19.

On Monday of this week, the Minister sent a telegram to the parties in which he strongly advised them to immediately