

Inquiries of the Ministry

Does the Prime Minister intend to launch an inquiry into the irregularities committed in connection with the appointment of commissioners for the 1966 general census?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The answer is no.

Mr. Grégoire: Would the minister tell us whether the government is interested in throwing some light on the matter or whether it prefers to hide everything under the carpet?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The government is always interested in the truth.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière): Would the minister or his assistant tell the house whether the persons selected to take the census have passed an examination to ascertain whether they are qualified for the job?

Mr. Speaker: The question is argumentative.

LABOUR RELATIONS**QUEBEC—STOPPAGE OF WORK BY
LONGSHOREMEN**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

In my opinion it concerns an urgent matter which is neither partisan nor political. It has to do with the increasing uneasiness among dock workers in Quebec and Montreal because of the difficulties they experience for parking.

Could the minister, who paid an official visit to the Quebec harbour yesterday and who has witnessed the situation, inform the house of the steps he intends to take to settle this problem and prevent general work stoppages as those which happened recently.

[*English*]

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was in Quebec to visit the port, and there was a temporary stoppage of work in the middle of the day. My colleague the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, was in Quebec with me. We went to the grain elevator where a considerable addition to the elevator was to be opened and was opened. In the presence of the workmen we then agreed, together with the port manager, to hear their grievances,

and it was our understanding that the three people delegated for that purpose were quite satisfied with the measures which were to be taken to meet the immediate situation.

I regret to have to say that I understand we were not as successful as we had hoped to be, and that the men are still out. I also understand that in Montreal this morning there was a discussion between the leaders of the union and the harbour authorities; that the arrangement which was put to the men was not acceptable and the strike, if it is to be called a strike, is still going on. I also understand that some men are out at Three Rivers or Trois-Rivières.

This is a very grave situation indeed. I welcome the opportunity, sir, to underline the gravity of this situation at a time when we have an unprecedented quantity of traffic moving through the St. Lawrence ports, including wheat; perhaps I could almost go so far as to say above all, wheat; both wheat for commercial export and wheat for relief. I sincerely hope that everything will be done by everyone who can play any part to bring this dispute to an end as quickly as possible.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Will the minister make a statement that the question of parking facilities for the convenience of the employees of the port will be looked into? I believe such action could alleviate the present situation.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, perhaps one who has not seen the situation personally should not offer an opinion on a matter of this kind. However, I am going to take the risk of saying that I do not believe parking facilities are the main question at all. I think if the question between the union and the employers could be settled this matter would be settled quite quickly and, as I said, we would have had no difficulty in Quebec yesterday. I believe there is a mixture of the two things, and I have asked the harbours board to do everything possible within reason to see that the men are satisfied. However, I think hon. members will realize that we cannot permit parking in areas where work is supposed to be going on and goods are supposed to be moved. If I may be permitted to give an example, it was agreed at Quebec that there was a particular area where at certain times ships were unloading and at that time parking would not be permitted, but it would be permitted, as it was more convenient for the men, when there were no ships coming in.