

*Interim Supply*

has its head office in New York, have precedence over Canadian legislation such as the Industrial Relations Act which was enacted by parliament and which governs labour conditions and employment of longshoremen in Montreal harbour.

During the past six months Montreal longshoremen went on strike three times and the strangest part of it all is that none of those strikes were organized by the international longshoremen's association, the American union which is negotiating a labour contract on behalf of the longshoremen. Neither were they directed against the employers, the shipping federation of Canada. They were decided by the dockers against their own union which omits to defend them, to represent them properly or to supply its members with the required information concerning the use made of the pension fund administered jointly by the employers and the American union.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, and as the Minister of Labour is also aware, since he appointed him himself, Judge René Lippé was appointed to investigate the pension system of the dockers and the administration of some \$6 million in that pension fund.

The report prepared and published by Judge Lippé last August does not satisfy the dockers because it does not say how the pension fund is administered; it does not say where that money is invested, how much it yields, and especially, that report makes no recommendation with a view to improving the lot of dockers being pensioned.

What are the demands of the Montreal harbour dockers?

The dockers' grievances are based on three points:

(1) the pension plan, (2) the security conditions on wharves, (3) the material vexations they endure in their work.

The Montreal harbour dockers now pay an amount of 12 cents per hour into a pension fund.

In 1963, in Montreal, 2,500 dockers worked a total of 3,689,257 hours on the waterfront, which means a payment of almost half a million dollars for only one year and a payment of \$200 per docker in 1963.

They would gladly pay that amount if they were sure to retire on a suitable pension. But that is not the case, Mr. Chairman. It is so hard to qualify for a pension that most stevedores will never get one, and all the money they have thus invested during all the years they have been working will remain in the retirement fund which is jointly

[Mr. Rondeau.]

administered by the employers and the international longshoremen's association.

Normally, to qualify for a pension, a stevedore must be 65 years of age. Should he quit his job and cease to be a stevedore at the age of 64 years, 11 months and 30 days, the poor man loses his contributions to the fund and his right to a pension. But even if he does work until 65, the Montreal stevedore is not sure to receive a pension; he must first be a paying member and must have paid up his dues with the American union, he must have worked on the water front continuously for at least 25 years, that is between the age of 40 and 65; he must have worked an average of 600 hours per year between the age of 60 and 65 years and have worked at least 1,500 hours in all, or an average of 300 hours a year.

If the stevedore meets all of those requirements—brace yourself—he gets a monthly pension of \$50. A monthly pension of \$50 when he has contributed to the retirement fund 12 cents an hour during 25 years. Is it not ridiculous? Do you not think, Mr. Chairman, that stevedores are entitled to ask questions, to ask how this money is being administered and to demand that a pension be paid out of the fund to stevedores who, because of old age or because they are no longer physically fit to do the hard jobs required of them on the waterfront, have to leave their employment before having reached 65 years?

For all these reasons, Mr. Chairman, the longshoremen of the harbour of Montreal are unhappy with the administration of the international longshoremen's association, and they have decided this summer, within the limits provided by the Industrial Relations Act, to join another union which, they believe, would protect their interest in a better way, namely the syndicat national des débardeurs which is affiliated with the national trade unions federation.

It was at that time that the international longshoremen's association decided to show its teeth and strike hard, seeing that it would lose the benefits and administration of a pension fund which, some people say, is worth over \$6 million, and according to the longshoremen themselves, it is worth over \$10 million in view of the amounts they have been paying into it since 1953.

Threats were phoned in, and obvious intimidation borne against the longshoremen who wanted to transfer their union allegiance. Some phone callers said: "We'll break your legs", while others asserted: "When there's a war, rebels are shot."