

Inquiries of the Ministry

difficult manning and safety provisions for towboats on the west coast, and since this report has now been leaked to the public, will the minister please consider making the report available to Members of Parliament?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, we have identified the leak. It has come from labour.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mackasey: Second, Mr. Speaker, in view of that report and as a result of it, the Minister of Transport has done something very positive which labour should appreciate. He has immediately set out to improve the regulations governing the towboat industry, and he has done it on a tripartite basis so that labour has a full voice in the preparation of these regulations. This might have been more suitable in the long run than tying up the whole coastal trade by a strike that may or may not have been necessary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister seems to want to argue the case for the employers, may I ask—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):—if the minister or his colleagues have taken any steps at all to ensure that the safety regulations which were criticized are being rectified? Would the minister use his good offices as Minister of Labour to have these safety precautions included in the collective bargaining agreement which is in dispute at the present time?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I have not been accused too often of fighting the employers' case. I am more interested in fighting the people's case. I am not fighting for the employer and I am not fighting for labour. I am fighting for the people that the hon. member from the NDP pointed out are the innocent victims in a dispute that may not have been necessary. The hon. member has asked what the Department of Labour has done about the situation. The Department of Labour, in co-operation with the Department of Transport, is at this very moment preparing appropriate regulations in order that safety measures will be applied to the whole industry and not only to the unionized section of the industry. In the final analysis this is in labour's best interests because it reduces the

[Mr. Rose.]

scope of non-union activities in this very vital industry in British Columbia. I can only repeat that we are present at that table, as are representatives of the Department of Transport and as are representatives of the unions and of management. This has been done in as fair and equitable way as possible, and if we have full co-operation we can get that industry back into operation.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, could the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The matter should not develop into a debate at this time. The hon. member is rising to ask a supplementary question. I will recognize him for that one supplementary, and then I will recognize the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister when the proposed regulations will come into effect, because this is the matter in dispute? The employees in question need to have some assurance that the safety provisions will be incorporated in the collective bargaining agreement. When will the proposed regulations be put into effect? If the minister could let the workers know that it would remove some of the fears.

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I think the workers could at least trust their own representatives in the group formulating the regulations. In so far as the question of collective bargaining is concerned, the unions have decided that they will bring this matter within the collective agreement. This is what the dispute is all about. Certainly the government will not, not while I am Minister of Labour, impose conditions in the collective agreement, because it is the prerogative of management and labour to include or exclude. In other words, if they want to compromise, if they want to be good citizens and do what is best for the workers as well as the industry, we will get an early settlement through the collective bargaining process.

Mr. Rose: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, since this is one of the most hazardous industries on the west coast I wonder if the minister could answer my question as to when this report will be available to Members of Parliament?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.