

Inquiries of the Ministry

the parties. With respect to the three major items referred to above, the material filed with us does not establish any basis upon which we could make specific or positive recommendations.

These parties have been in contractual relationships for several years and the present remuneration, working conditions and methods of computing pay are all the result of previous collective bargaining between these parties. It would require the most cogent and compelling evidence to justify changes in these arrangements which would amount to approximately 98 per cent of the present labour costs of the companies involved. We are unable to find such evidence in the material presented to us. On the other hand, the companies appear disposed to make a reasonable increase. Under the circumstances we do not think it proper to press the companies to disclose the amount of increase which they consider reasonable.

It is obvious to us that these parties must resume direct negotiations at some time in the near future, and that it is probably better for all concerned if any offer of increase which the companies might wish to make should be withheld until such time as there is reasonable prospect of direct negotiations being resumed on a normal and usual basis.

On May 7, which was yesterday—

Mr. Speaker: Is there not some other way to get this information on the record? I see there are two more pages. Perhaps the minister could summarize, or perhaps he could ask for the unanimous consent of the house to place the material on the record.

Mr. Rowe: Take the brief as read.

Mr. Gregg: I should like to have this statement complete because I do not think the information is within the knowledge of most hon. members. However, if it is the will of the house I would be quite willing to have the three telegrams I was proposing to quote, and which are dated yesterday, placed on the record.

Mr. Speaker: I take it that hon. members would like to have the information. I am sorry I interrupted. The minister may go ahead and complete the statement. I take it that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would like to see the end of the statement.

Mr. Rowe: Everybody would.

Mr. Brooks: We all would.

Mr. Knowles: On a question of privilege, I think that might be misunderstood. I should like to hear the whole of the statement.

Mr. Rowe: Answer the question fully.

Mr. Gregg: Yesterday, May 7, I received the following telegram from Mr. Hal C. Banks of the union.

Regret to inform you that the unlicensed personnel employed by N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited and Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company Limited have voted on a referendum ballot by a majority of 98 per cent to withdraw from the service and call a legal strike on the

[Mr. Gregg.]

above companies to commence noon Thursday May 10th, 1956. The above companies are the only lakes companies that will be affected at this point in so far as this union is concerned. Respectfully offer our wholehearted support and assistance in any efforts that you may deem necessary to avoid this very serious development.

On the same day—that is yesterday, May 7—I received from Mr. T. R. McLagan for the employers the following telegram:

The negotiating committee of the Association of Lake Carriers met with the bargaining committee of the Seafarers International Union at Montreal today as arranged. During the course of the meeting the association made an offer of settlement of the dispute which the union rejected. The union maintains its original position and informs the association that the unlicensed personnel employed by N. M. Paterson and Sons and Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company Limited would strike at noon on tenth of May. This association through its bargaining committee stands ready to continue negotiation with a view to effecting a settlement of the dispute and avoiding a major transportation crisis.

Late yesterday, May 7, to the telegram received from the representative of the union I replied as follows:

I have your wire of this date advising of the union's intention to have the unlicensed personnel represented by your union employed by N. M. Paterson and Sons and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company Limited embark upon a strike effective at noon tenth May. I appreciate your offer to co-operate in an effort to effect settlement of the dispute. This dispute is one between your union and the Association of Lake Carriers comprising seven great lakes shipping companies including the two companies upon whom strike notices have been served. In circumstances there is serious danger that the result of action you are proposing to take would be the tie-up of all shipping operated by the companies comprising the Lake Carriers Association. This development would bring serious economic loss to many Canadian industries and to their employees as well as to western farmers in preventing the movement of grain from western Canada to eastern Canadian ports. I am advised that the bargaining committee representing the association at its meeting with your union today made a definite proposal for a settlement which your union has rejected while not moving from its original demands. In my view this dispute should be capable of peaceful settlement and to this end I am prepared to provide mediation service to your union and the association but the strike deadline which you have set does not permit sufficient time for adequate mediation. In the circumstances I would appreciate your agreement to postpone strike action pending mediation which I am prepared to arrange forthwith.

To that wire I have had no reply.

PIPE LINES**TRANS-CANADA PIPE LINES—DECISION OF FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Now that he has been let in on the secret by the Minister of Trade