

Pacific Coast Longshoremen Dispute

few days, if necessary, and even if I should return after two, three or four days, Mr. Wilson will stay there as long as it is necessary for him to do so to try to resolve this matter.

● (12 noon)

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Nicholson: Would the right hon. gentleman permit me to express a hope. While I welcome this chance to put forward my feelings at some length in this matter, I hope that after members of different parties in the house have had the opportunity of fully expressing their views they will not feel it necessary to adjourn the house after the debate has concluded. Once there has been full discussion on this subject I hope the house will get back to the other matters set down as the business for today.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I have had an unconcealed admiration for the minister in his capacity as an advocate. He was a distinguished member of the bar of British Columbia in the days when I was actively engaged at the bar. I would invariably look through the reports to find his name, for I know that wherever his name appeared there would be an interesting judgment. Because judges are only as effective and as good as the counsel who appear before them. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have had an example of an unusually able piece of advocacy. However, that advocacy has been in support of postponement and delay, another four or five days of uncertainty, and a failure to act.

It is not for me to say whether or not the law at the present time covers the situation in British Columbia. If it does not, it should. I suggest that this parliament should not wait around while our expansion is being challenged in the way it is by what is happening on the Pacific coast. There is no reason we should not act now. I think the house as a whole would agree to accept an amendment dealing with the situation to which the minister has referred during the course of his argument.

The minister says that he would not expect a report, even an interim report, for a period of six months. A final report would take a year. Parliament cannot permit any such delay, or anything approximating it.

Whatever the merits of the situation, Mr. Speaker, what is happening in Vancouver has all the appearance of an invasion of Canada's sovereignty as result of the action of Harry Bridges, a man who dominates the labour

front in certain fields in San Francisco. Bridges shall not blow the whistle for Canada; let that be clear.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: This is what he has been doing. He did it successfully in the United States. We are having regular examples of invasions of our sovereignty. In today's press despatches there is another example: The United States government has seen fit to tell the government of Canada what the parliament of Canada should do in respect of the legislation before parliament in connection with the Mercantile Bank. This country cannot allow itself to be pushed around in the exercise of its sovereign rights.

The minister has an unusual capacity for discussion and for seeing both sides. Today, Mr. Speaker, he acted the part of a judge, listening to arguments on both sides and then deciding nothing could be done except to listen.

Mr. Nicholson: Let us hope, Mr. Speaker, that this will be corrected on my next visit.

Mr. Diefenbaker: How can we hope for correction in the next few days when there was no correction when the minister made his last visit to the coast? What has taken place on the coast which leads the minister to believe that his powers of mediation, if I can use that expression, have suddenly reached a higher degree of fruition than was the case when he visited the coast a week ago on the same mission? At least, Mr. Speaker, it was not quite the same mission; there was a game on at the same time. Vancouver had an unusual attraction last week and various organizations found it necessary to be out there just at that time.

I suggest to the minister that because he apparently believes that there should be a right of appeal against an order of the Canada Labour Relations Board—I think an appeal to the governor in council was mentioned—why not bring in the necessary legislation and let the house agree to it? The legislation could be brought in today by consent. I take it that if the minister did have the right of appeal he would recommend to the governor in council certain action which would end this serious situation on the coast.

It has often been said, Mr. Speaker, that parliament does not operate effectively, that it delays too long. Parliament cannot delay for six months for an examination of what might or might not be done, and of what has been