

West Coast Ports Operations Act

are available to the public through publishers and bookstores. I would, therefore, ask the Hon. Member to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Ellis: Transfer for debate.

Madam Speaker: Transferred for debate.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, I ask that the other notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Madam Speaker: Shall the remaining notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WEST COAST PORTS OPERATIONS ACT, 1982

MEASURE PROVIDING FOR RESUMPTION OF LONGSHORING SERVICES AT WEST COAST PORTS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour) moved that Bill C-137, to provide for the resumption and continuation of longshoring and related operations at ports on the west coast of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

He said: Madam Speaker, in entering this debate I would like to say first that the role of Minister of Labour is one which holds many challenges and rewards in a country as economically and geographically diverse as Canada. On this particular occasion, I am faced with a situation which evokes mixed feelings on my part. On the one hand, I regret the necessity of having to introduce legislation to restore longshoring operations at Canada's west coast ports. On the other hand, I accept my responsibility to bring about a conclusion to a work stoppage which has brought the export of western grain to a virtual standstill and has caused hardship to the business community and its employees dependent upon water transportation for shipment of their goods and resources. It is a situation in which the parties to the dispute are able to inflict more damage on others than on themselves.

As well as conferring rights upon the parties to bargain collectively and arrive at acceptable terms and conditions of employment for the employees, the industrial relations framework, set out under Part V of the Canada Labour Code, clearly places the responsibility for resolving any labour-management disputes on the parties themselves. Unfortunately, there are occasions where the Government, as custodian of the economic and public interests of Canadians, must assume the responsibility entrusted to it and act in a firm and responsible manner to ensure that the interests of all those parties affected by a particular work stoppage are protected.

The contract negotiations to which this particular piece of legislation apply concern the renewal of a collective agreement

involving the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association and the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, Canadian Area, which expired on December 31, 1981.

The notice of dispute was filed by the union, representing some 4,000 regular and casual longshoremen in ports on the Canadian west coast, on January 7, 1982. Prior to this, the parties had been meeting in direct negotiations over a three-month period without reaching agreement on a new contract. A conciliation officer was appointed on January 19 of this year but was unable to assist the parties in resolving their outstanding differences. Following receipt of the report of the conciliation officer, I subsequently appointed Mr. H. Allan Hope, Q.C., of Prince George, British Columbia as Conciliation Commissioner in the dispute on March 3, 1982.

Following his appointment, Mr. Hope arranged conciliation meetings with the parties towards the latter part of March. In the course of these meetings, the Conciliation Commissioner convinced the parties of the merits of returning to direct negotiations, and in this regard the parties met in direct bargaining several times during the month of April and the first half of the month of May. Mr. Hope again entered the talks on May 20 and held a series of meetings with the parties throughout the month of June. Again, at the Conciliation Commissioner's urging, the parties returned to the process of direct bargaining on several occasions during July. With negotiations deadlocked and no prospect for a settlement in the dispute, the Commissioner filed his final report with me and it was subsequently released to the parties on August 13, 1982.

In his report, Mr. Hope made recommendations dealing not only with wage increases but also several contentious issues, such as container handling, shift differential premiums, training of casual longshoremen and the employer's right to institute continuous operations. The Conciliation Commissioner recommended a three-year agreement with wage increases of 12.4 per cent in the first year, 10.6 per cent in year two and a wage reopener in the third year of the contract. The current hourly base wage rate for west coast longshoremen is \$12.55.

• (1520)

In the area of container handling, Mr. Hope recommended that there be a one-year moratorium on the application of the container handling provision in the collective agreement with an automatic reinstatement of the provision at the end of that time.

The Maritime Employers Association has maintained that the container handling clause, which provides the union with jurisdiction over the staffing and destaffing of consolidated cargo containers which are destined or come from any point within the Vancouver local area or the Prince Rupert port area, placed the Canadian ports at a competitive disadvantage with other major ports such as Seattle.

The employer felt that the removal of the limitations provided within the clause would sharply increase the amount