

Pacific Coast Longshoremen Dispute

would not help. If I failed to convey to members what I meant to say, perhaps that failure arose because I did not take enough time when answering questions asked during the question period to fully explain. What I meant to say was that the difficulty involved in appointing a mediator arose partly because a mediator cannot overrule a decision of the Canada Labour Relations Board. Lines have been drawn in this situation and both sides have taken stands on a matter of principle. The introduction of a mediator into that atmosphere at an earlier date might not have been too helpful.

I did not say that an amendment to the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act giving the right of appeal from decisions of the Canada Labour Relations Board was necessarily the answer to this problem. I suggested that it might be one avenue which should be followed or at least one which certainly should be given serious consideration.

The suggestion has been made this morning, and repeatedly during the past few months, that we may have to change the rules or criteria under which the labour board operates. That is a much more serious matter because it would affect not only this dispute but others that have been referred to in this house. All these factors have to be considered and the introduction of legislation to provide for appeals from decisions may be only one possible way of bringing about a solution. That may be an important step, but I think it might well be only one in a series which are needed to correct the situation to which the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and others have referred.

The last point on which I wish to comment is that referred to by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas). He suggested I had not explained the actions of the employers in regard to call-outs. I do not think it is up to the minister to explain any such thing, particularly why the employers have acted as they have or why the employees have acted as they have. These actions are matters for their own consciences. I reported to this house the facts of life, and the facts which now exist.

The employers have stated to me, and publicly, that while there are certain longshoremen continuing to work others have not been called out because the employers cannot afford to pay them unless they receive a reasonable return for money being paid. That is the position they take and they have every right to take it in a free country, just as the workers have a right to take other positions.

[Mr. Nicholson.]

The problems involved are very difficult and will not be resolved overnight. They will only be resolved in the right atmosphere and at the appropriate time. I hope that appropriate time will be within the next day or two, or sooner if possible.

Mr. Speaker, under the circumstances and in view of the debate that we have had I hope the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke (Mr. Johnston) will feel he has accomplished a very worthwhile purpose in bringing this matter to the attention of the house and will now withdraw his motion.

Mr. Chatterton: Mr. Speaker, would it be helpful if the minister indicated today that he was prepared to consider the introduction of an amendment to the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act? That might be an inducement to the parties to the dispute to get together over the week end.

Mr. Nicholson: I thought I had dealt with that point in my opening remarks when I said we were considering a number of alternatives, including the one referred to by the hon. member.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention in moving this adjournment nor the intention of the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Patterson) in seconding it, to make impossible demands on the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) or the government. We felt that a useful purpose could be served by airing this entire problem in this house. I believe now that when the minister goes to Vancouver he will know the temper of this house and through the elected representatives, the temper of the country. I hope he will take with him the variety of interesting and profitable suggestions which have been put forward during this debate. I assure him that we wish him well in his important task. In view of what has taken place and in view of the intervention promised by the minister, I now ask that the motion be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member have leave to withdraw his motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Order discharged and motion withdrawn.

Mr. Winkler: Mr. Speaker, before we start orders of the day, in order to allow the anchor men, if I may use that expression, to return to the house, perhaps we should adjourn for half an hour.