

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 3, 1975

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY OF DELEGATES OF THE FRANCE-CANADA INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Speaker: Before the oral question period, I wish to mention the tenth anniversary of the France-Canada Interparliamentary Association. We are quite honoured in stressing the importance of the event to receive the French delegation.

I am pleased to draw to the attention of the House the presence in the Speaker's gallery of the members of the French delegation under its very distinguished president, Mr. Lucien Neuwirth. On behalf of hon. members I extend to our distinguished guests a very sincere welcome.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN IN QUEBEC—OUTLINE OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO DEAL WITH SITUATION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister indicated yesterday that the government was preparing to take certain legal actions in respect of the withdrawal of the services of longshoremen in Montreal. He said he would expect that by "tomorrow", which is today, he or one of his ministers would be able to inform the House in this regard.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Justice or myself could indicate that contempt charges are being laid this afternoon—they may have already been laid—and that actions are being taken against a certain number of longshoremen. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants further details, perhaps the Minister of Labour might give them.

● (1410)

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Labour might try his hand at telling us what is going on.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would advise the Leader of the Opposition, as the Prime Minister indicated, that contempt proceedings are being initiated this afternoon against the union in question. I have also been advised that this afternoon there will be charges laid under the Criminal Code against

the president and the vice-president of the union and other people. Also proceedings are being initiated for offences under the Canada Labour Code against certain individuals. Fourth, I would advise the Leader of the Opposition that evidence is being analysed concerning possible intimidation. After the analysis of that evidence, if it should appear to be sufficient, we will turn it over to the provincial authorities. In the meantime, so far as any possibility of intimidation being carried on on the premises to prevent workers turning up for work or other types of intimidation, the National Harbours police in co-operation with the Montreal police would prevent this form of conduct.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I should like to address this question to the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Justice. Could either gentleman indicate the nature of the criminal charges being laid and tell us whether these charges are being laid under a general instruction of the Minister of Justice of Canada or under the auspices of the government of the province of Quebec.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the initial charges being proceeded with involve actions which constitute possible infractions under the Criminal Code and the Canada Labour Code, and accordingly those will be proceeded with by the agents who ordinarily are agents of the Attorney General of Canada, but insofar as they involve Criminal Code matters they will be acting as agents of the provincial attorney general. There may be certain other matters more clearly and ordinarily criminal in their nature, without any connection with the Labour Code as such, and these will be referred to the agents of the provincial attorney general.

STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN IN QUEBEC—NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PROSECUTIONS—TYPE OF PROCEEDINGS AGAINST VICE-PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT OF UNION

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell the House how many individuals are involved in the series of prosecutions we have been hearing about in the last few minutes. Are we talking about half a dozen or are we talking about hundreds of people? What is the effect of this and what is the anticipated number of men who will be subject to charges, either contempt charges or charges under the Criminal Code or the Labour Code.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, so far as the reference to charges this afternoon is concerned, these charges are against the president, the vice-president and three or four others. That is my information as of this afternoon. With regard to the possibility of future charges, I cannot give any further information at this time.