

Oral Questions

to try to resolve the dispute on their own. It is my understanding they are meeting in Vancouver this afternoon, and I hope that their efforts will lead to some positive results ending the dispute.

● (1450)

Mr. Mayer: Madam Speaker, we appreciate that, and it is my understanding that the parties are meeting at two o'clock Vancouver time, which is five o'clock Ottawa time. I would like to suggest to the Minister that talk is certainly not enough.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER ORDER RESUMPTION OF WORK

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Is the Minister prepared to get directly involved to the extent of instructing the parties to go back to work while the negotiations are under way? His lack of action, again at a time of record unemployment, is causing very serious damage to the total Canadian economy and especially to the western grain farmers. I would therefore urge the Minister to accept his responsibility as Minister of Labour and to become directly involved with this unfortunate dispute.

Hon. Chas L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, perhaps the hon. member does not realize that a Commissioner was appointed in March of this year, that he consulted with both parties and produced a report in August this year, and that the two parties have exhausted all possible means available to themselves. I hope that, with good will and determination, the two sides can resolve the matter. If not, the only final recourse would be to bring the matter before Parliament.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POLAND—ENFORCEMENT OF CANADIAN SANCTIONS

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the new Secretary of State for External Affairs. On February 23 of this year, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs made a belated and half-hearted statement on behalf of the Canadian Government in connection with the situation in Poland. He announced certain very minor sanctions that the Government was imposing because it objected to what had happened in Poland concerning the crackdown on Solidarity and the human rights abuses there. Among those, for example, a program of Canadian-Polish academic exchanges was suspended. Since that time none of the objectives set out by the Government in its release have been met.

I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs is the Government enforcing even those minor sanctions. Since these have been unsuccessful and the Polish Government has gone on to further violations of the Helsinki Accords to dissolve Solidarity legally, is the Government now planning further sanctions of a more meaningful nature? If so, what are those sanctions, and will the Government do more

than have its backbenchers practise rhetoric concerning this situation?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I believe that the Canadian Government has been extremely outspoken about the plight of the Polish people who recently, as was indicated by the motion presented earlier, were deprived by law of the possibility of maintaining free trade unions. Certainly Solidarity was banished and we have protested that action, not only because it is at variance with the wishes of the Polish people but also because it is in total contradiction to the international obligations undertaken by the Government of Poland.

The Hon. Member asks whether we propose any further sanctions. I want to tell him that if in present circumstances there could be a concerted way by which additional pressure could be brought upon the Polish Government to bring about changes, then we would consider any such action; but in present circumstances it seems to me, in view of the turbulence which is accepted by the Government of Poland within its own country, and in view of the demonstrations by the Polish people which have been turned back by the Government, that the effect of additional sanctions in the field of exchanges would likely be very ineffective indeed. If the Hon. Member can produce a series of proposals which would have an important effect in changing the attitude of the Polish Government, then I would certainly be the first to consider them.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, the Minister's foreign policy is as clear, concise and effective as his financial policy was. I would refer him to my statements of March 24 and October 15 of this year for a concise program of action that he might take.

SALE OF GRAIN

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): My supplementary question is as follows: the Prime Minister of this country gave implicit endorsement to what happened in Poland last December and early January, and the Government has done nothing effective since then. Specifically, will the Government renew the agreement entered into with the Polish Government which expires on December 21 and which provides extremely generous credit terms concerning the sale of grain to Poland? I understand that by December 21 we will be out approximately \$1.25 billion under that agreement. Will the Government renew that agreement with these generous credit terms, or not? Will it take any action with respect to the quotas given Polish trawlers to take fish within our 200-mile economic zone, which is not required by treaty nor any other way, but given at the discretion of the Government? Will it do anything convincing at all? Will it act at all, or make decisions at all?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member has asked whether a decision has been taken with respect to the provision of credit to Poland for the purchase of agricultural products. I must tell the hon. member