

Labour Dispute at Montreal

for might be supplied. They might have had a reason for doing what they did because in most of these disputes there is something to be said for both sides. But in this particular case the employers contend that the language of the report is clear and that they want these men to be made available on the docks as the Picard report indicates should be the case, and if there is any gripe or grievance then reference should be made to the provisions of the agreement.

In reply to the question put to me by the hon. member for Ontario I should say that I received a long wire from the shipping federation within 18 or 20 hours following my wire, in which they said that they could not agree to arbitration because this is only another delaying tactic on the part of the longshoremen. I am not saying that there were delaying tactics on the part of the longshoremen, but it was the view of the shipping federation that to appoint an arbitrator at that time or even now would entail a series of lengthy hearings which might extend until long after freeze-up and no benefits whatever would be derived from the Picard report although the added wages that were agreed upon in June of 1966 are being paid.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister—

Mr. Nicholson: Will the hon. member please resume his seat and wait to ask his questions until I finish my remarks.

Mr. Starr: No wonder the minister cannot settle arguments.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, may I say with deference that I was very patient with the hon. member. This is the third time he has risen to interrupt. I have attempted to answer his questions and when I am giving him the answers he should not interrupt me.

Mr. Starr: We will not ask any more questions. Let the minister carry on.

Mr. Nicholson: Rightly or wrongly the shipping federation said to me that it had been made clear to them that although the longshoremen had indicated they were accepting the Picard report they never intended to do so. This is what they said in their wire as justification for their action in not agreeing to arbitration, which they say would delay matters for weeks. I will read from it:

It is crystal clear from Mr. Gleason's testimony—

[**Mr. Nicholson:**]

Earlier they identified Mr. Gleason as the president of the International Longshoremen's Association with headquarters in Brooklyn, I believe.

—that his union never had the slightest intention of respecting the binding conclusions of the Picard report. The charges and complaints emanating from the I.L.A. in recent days are merely a smokescreen to divert attention from this vital fact. In the light of the following—

Then they quote certain testimony which was given by Mr. Gleason before the Picard commission in June of last year. They go on to say:

On June 1, 1967 Mr. Thomas Gleason of New York, international president of the I.L.A., appeared before the commission. Pages 90 to 93 of the transcript of his evidence that day are particularly revealing. Under examination by his own counsel—

By the counsel for the longshoremen's union.

—Phil Cutler, the following exchanges took place:

Q. You have told us you have participated in the collective bargaining relationships in the St. Lawrence river ports. You have been in here at various times. Would you tell the commission whether you feel you know your men, your membership of the St. Lawrence river ports?

A. Well I think I really do. I have come up here on three or four occasions when it was really rough even before I became the international president. I think this is one of the most militant groups that we have.

This was their own international president speaking.

They are not any more militant than we have in any other areas but in Canada they are a very militant group. I think that anybody who would try to force a decision on them once again would have trouble. I think they could not make them heed it. I am positively sure nobody would be able to control men if this kind of action would happen.

Q. What kind of action?

A. Well an arbitrary decision would be handed down and automatically say "from now on your gangs are 16 men" or "your gangs are 19 men" or whatever changes you would make. I believe you have a contract which is in effect here now until December 31, 1967, the end of this year. I don't think anybody could make this kind of a change during the life of this agreement without having a complete rebellion on their hands as far as the rank and file.

Q. This is your belief?

A. This is my belief.

Q. This is your belief as an individual and as president of the I.L.A.? Now I ask this of you Mr. Gleason. You have spoken of the steps that you had to undertake in the New York port area to have the men understand and accept this. You have said that without that it could not be undertaken in Montreal.