

avoidable danger to workers in Canada of the Ford Motor Company concerns lay-offs that may occur in terms of production aims for the Canadian market, and in view of the fact the company has indicated there may be a total shutdown of production in Canada as most of their models are exported to the United States, will the minister obtain an assurance from the company that, if this difficult decision has to be taken in some form, it will keep at least the number of employees at work required to produce cars for the Canadian market?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am told that this would not be very practical in view of the integrated operations between Canada and the U.S.A.

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COMMUNICATIONS

RATE INCREASES GRANTED TO BELL CANADA BY TRANSPORT COMMISSION—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister arising out of the decision by the Canadian Transport Commission to grant the Bell Telephone Company substantial rate increases totalling more than \$47 million a year. I should like to ask whether the government is studying this decision for the purpose of taking any action with respect to it?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this matter has not come to cabinet as yet, but I believe questions having to do with the Canadian Transport Commission would be more properly dealt with by the Minister of Transport. I do not know whether he has advice of anything in this regard.

Mr. Lewis: I think it would concern the Minister of Communications rather than the Minister of Transport in this case. In view of the seriousness of this matter and bearing in mind the net income of Bell Canada in 1971 was over \$147 million compared with \$133 million in the preceding year, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will assure the House that he will look into the question of whether these increases are justified from the point of view of the consumer and whether, as the Governor in Council has authority to do under section 335(4) of the Railway Act, the government will ask the commission to furnish all the information in its possession relative to the application and the decision for study by the government?

Mr. Trudeau: I will be very glad to raise this question with the minister.

Mr. Lewis: If the Prime Minister does that, will he also draw the minister's attention to the fact that section 64(1) of the National Transportation Act gives the Governor in Council authority to rescind or vary any decision or order of the Canadian Transport Commission? May I also ask the Prime Minister whether the government will use that section to rescind this order for a rate increase which, I suggest to him, is further gouging by Bell Canada of the Canadian consumer?

Inquiries of the Ministry

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that the last part of the question is not entirely procedurally correct.

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[Translation]

LABOUR RELATIONS

QUEBEC—LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE—STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Labour.

Can he report on the progress of negotiations with regard to the longshoremen strike now paralyzing the ports of Quebec and Montreal, and tell us whether we can hope for an early settlement of that conflict?

[English]

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Acting Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Labour I might point out that in the ports of Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec a collective agreement was arrived at several weeks ago with beneficial effects to both the employers and longshoremen. The collective agreement contains grievance and arbitration procedures. If the leaders of the unions refuse to utilize their legal rights, that is, the grievance and arbitration procedures, then I can only conclude that they certainly are not acting in the best interests of their members, nor within the mandate they have at their disposal.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Minister of Labour. Will he say whether officials of the Department of Labour are taking steps to bring the two parties together in order to settle this dispute?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I would presume that the solution is so obvious, namely, that these experienced union leaders should take advantage of the arbitration procedure included in the collective agreement, that the officials of the Department of Labour have not proceeded to take an active part without invitation.

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GRAIN

RAPESEED—LAYING OF CHARGES BY WHEAT BOARD AGAINST CERTAIN FARMERS FOR OVERDELIVERY— REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I had intended to ask my question of the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, but in his absence I should like to direct it to the Minister of Agriculture. Is the minister aware that the Wheat Board has caused charges to be laid under the Criminal Code against a number of western farmers for so-called overdelivery of rapeseed for which the farmers have direct production contracts with seed