

Oral Questions

to protect our marine and our mineral resources on our continental shelf?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I regret to advise the hon. member that I differ with the premise he has established, namely that all is lost at the conference. I do not take that attitude at this point. I believe there may be, and probably still is, some ability to cope with the problem that he has raised. Certainly the delegation is at work, and although I cannot say for certain it may be that there can be progress, particularly with respect to the continental margin.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the vital importance of Canada obtaining at least management rights to marine resources on the continental shelf, and in view of the apparent failure at Geneva, which I submit is due to lack of an aggressive stance by this government, have preliminary negotiations on a bilateral basis been held with a view to agreeing on quotas as a preliminary step to whatever unilateral action the government will eventually have to take?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian delegation is operating in good faith at the conference and it would certainly be in conflict with that position to commence bilateral deals which imply the collapse and failure of the conference.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**STRIKE OF QUEBEC LONGSHOREMEN—EFFECT OF FEED GRAIN SUPPLY—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION**

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Can the minister tell the House whether or not the crisis which led us to sit all night to bring in legislation to end the strike at the three river ports has passed? I want specifically to ask the minister whether the concern that engaged us all that night, which was grain supplies to Quebec farm producers, has been remedied to the point where supplies are now sufficient to meet their needs, which apparently was not the case last week.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, my information is that grain supplies are adequate to meet the need and that there is no interference with the movement of grain, as was not the case prior to this House passing the legislation. So that particular element which contributed finally to the emergency has by and large been removed. However, the very disturbing element of apparent defiance of the law is still there.

Mr. Fraser: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister tell the House exactly what steps are being taken today, and what steps are proposed for the next few days to make sure that the law is going to be enforced?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Officials of the justice department are in Montreal examining

[Mr. Crouse.]

the facts of the situation, which hopefully will establish what I strongly suspect is defiance of the law, and we will take the appropriate legal remedies. Once having ascertained those facts, although I think this question might be more properly put to the Minister of Justice, I believe there will be an application for an injunction on Monday.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, is the minister telling the House that some days after the legislation has taken effect and the men are not back to work there is still a necessity to have officials gathering factual information of the situation, or is the minister saying that what the officials are doing is gathering the necessary evidence to make the necessary application?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): That is essentially what I meant, Mr. Speaker. They are gathering the necessary evidence.

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HARBOURS**MONTREAL—ABILITY OF MARITIME EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION TO MEET LOAN COMMITMENTS**

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport if he has a moment or two, but I would not want to interrupt anything. Can the minister now answer the question I put to him yesterday in respect of the level of loans that have been guaranteed by this government for a Canadian association of foreign interests, namely the Maritime Employers' Association? I would ask at the same time whether the minister has had any conversations with his colleague, the Minister of Labour, in respect of his conversations last night with officials of the Maritime Employers' Association and, if so, did he discuss whether the MEA is in a position to continue to honour its commitments to the bank, or will the government have to step in and exercise this guarantee?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is something I am discussing at the present time. The total amount of money loaned to the MEA, not by the government alone but by the banks and the government, is about \$11 million. I think the government is guaranteeing \$2.5 million, as well as loans from the National Harbours Board of \$2.5 million. Those are the figures I remember.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I would direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. If in fact the minister did meet with management or officials of the Maritime Employers' Association last night, or sometime yesterday, as we understand, I should like to ask if this question of the MEA loans from the two banks was discussed, and was there any indication from the officials about the ability of the association to meet its commitments? Was the question of the government's guarantee of a portion of the total loan, which is somewhere in the order of \$18 million now, discussed at the meetings, and were there discussions in respect of a request for additional funds or additional help in relation to the current dispute at the river ports?