

Labour Dispute at Montreal

appointed by the government following a decision by this parliament, the position taken yesterday by the Minister of Labour that there is nothing he can do is completely untenable. After all, parliaments and governments have intervened in many labour disputes. We intervened in this dispute in 1966. We intervened in the railway strike and passed legislation imposing binding arbitration on the railway workers. I am sure the minister knows that the railway workers and their unions did not want that binding arbitration and are not happy with the awards the arbitrators made. We have intervened in such disputes in the past, and I suggest we have no alternative but to intervene now.

• (11:40 a.m.)

What can the minister do? It may be that he is legally and technically correct in saying he has no legislative power to intervene, but I am sure if he asked representatives of the shipping federation and of the union to meet with him here in Ottawa or in Montreal, those representatives would not refuse to attend such a meeting. I suggest that at such a meeting the areas of disagreement could be discussed and clarified. If at that meeting agreement could not be reached between the two parties on what the arbitration award actually meant, then it seems to me further arbitration would be necessary immediately.

I suggest to the minister and the government that if we are to have labour-management relations which work, if we are not to be plagued with strikes, illegal stoppages or lock-outs, conciliation and arbitration must be performed by a person or persons acceptable to both sides. If either side believes the particular arbitrator or arbitrators are not fair and that that side will not get a just hearing, then when the award is made it will not be accepted.

I suggest to the minister that in Canada there are quite a number of people who are acceptable to both labour and management. If Mr. Picard is not acceptable to one side or the other—I pass no judgment on Mr. Picard; I do not know too much about him or his record—then I suggest to the minister that he appoint another arbitrator. Mr. Carl Goldenberg has acted as an arbitrator in a large number of disputes. There is also Mr. Justice Laskin, and a large number of other people acceptable to both sides.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the minister convene a meeting of the parties immediately. If agreement cannot be reached at a direct meeting between the union and

[Mr. Orlikow.]

management in the presence of the minister and his officials, then the minister should immediately appoint an arbitrator acceptable to both the union and management to settle the issues which are still in doubt and which have caused this stoppage.

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot for moving the adjournment motion. What we are engaged in is our annual exercise in attempting to free the flow of exports through our dock facilities. We have not quite landed on the anniversary of the last time the business of the house was adjourned to discuss a dock tie up, but we are only a week away from it. This means that an entire year has elapsed during which legislation could have been introduced to deal with this area of the economy, legislation which would have been more than a patchwork solution to an immediate problem and which would have provided some different means of settling this sort of dispute that would not involve the disruption of the flow of exports.

We can expect that if such legislation is not introduced during the coming year then in exactly one year's time, give or take a day or two, we shall be engaged in this same exercise. It seems that annually we pass legislation to deal with emergency situations, to get goods flowing again, but we do not compensate industries thousands of miles away from the work stoppages that suffer not only in the immediate year of the stoppage but in successive years, due to lost markets caused by lack of confidence in the ability of those industries to move their goods on time.

I would use the same example I used a year ago. I have received the same sort of telegram that I received a year ago. The only difference in this case is that the east coast ports are substituted for the west coast ports. I realize that the dispute itself is of a slightly different nature, but the effect on the particular industry in my province, my constituency, is exactly the same. Such a situation as this produces in that industry, and I am sure in hundreds of others clear across the country, an absolutely scalding frustration at the inability of this parliament to move effectively to prevent this becoming the annual occurrence that we all know it has become.

Looking at the example of the fruit industry in British Columbia, I would point out