

prices and, if so, can he report to the House the results of these conversations?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the last advice I received on this matter, perhaps about an hour ago, was that the Canadian company is considering its position but has made no decision.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister was not in respect of what advice he had received from the company by some means but whether he had been in direct contact with the company in order to make known the views of parliament, and to express the opinion put forward in the House today by the Minister of Finance, that some of these huge profits should be converted into price reductions and that under no circumstances will an increase in the price of cars be welcome at this time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, officials of my department were in touch with officials of the company today who were reminded of their undertaking in respect of narrowing the differential. They indicated that they are quite prepared to live up to that undertaking.

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[Translation]

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

ACTION TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF CORPORATION

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Transport.

Could the minister indicate whether he has received suggestions from the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in order to solve their financing problem and does he intend before long to take measures to correct the poor financial position of the authority?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there are two different problems in the question that has been asked: one concerning the labour relations between the Seafarers' International Union and the Seaway Authority, and one concerning the financing problem of the Seaway Authority. I do not know which one of these questions I should answer, but I will certainly not handle both at the same time.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

I think my question is very simple. The new president, Mr. Normandeau, made suggestions concerning the financing of the St. Lawrence Seaway. We know it already has a debt that is almost beyond reimbursement and I ask the minister what steps he will take to settle the matter, and whether he will take into account the recommendations the Carter report made a few years ago?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, the only answer I can give is the following: settlement of the collective agreement between the Seafarers' International Union of Canada and the St. Lawrence Seaway has abso-

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lutely nothing to do with the latter's financing. With regard to financing the seaway, it is a question of deciding whether we are willing to increase the rates to allow it to become more profitable. We are now studying precisely that question.

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[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS

DISPUTE BETWEEN SEAFARERS' UNION AND LAKE CARRIERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. In light of the fact that we all want to see goods moving through the St. Lawrence Seaway as they should, is the minister now in a position to tell us whether he has made an accurate assessment of the Seafarers' Union dispute at this time, in the knowledge of the disastrous error he made last Friday when he said he is hopeful and optimistic that no strike will occur?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Without in any way indicating acquiescence in the gross misinterpretation by the hon. member of what I said last Friday, I would indicate that yes, I have made an accurate assessment of the situation to the best of my ability.

Mr. Alexander: In the light of that answer, has the minister now taken upon himself to introduce special initiatives in order that the parties can return to the bargaining table? Has he done at least that?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): I do not know exactly what the hon. member means by "special initiatives" but if he is asking whether we are doing everything we possibly can to assist the parties in resolving this dispute, the answer is yes.

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the hon. member for Hamilton West on a second supplementary, but we have reached the point in the question period when I have to appeal to hon. members to limit their supplementaries because there is not much more than five minutes left before I will have to call orders of the day.

Mr. Alexander: In light of the fact the minister has indicated that he feels his personal intervention in this matter would be a little premature, can he now advise whether he is waiting until April 1 before he takes a personal interest in this matter or whether he is at least getting on the telephone to discuss these matters with the parties involved?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): I do not know from what information the hon. member draws his miscellaneous conclusions but they are totally erroneous, and that should concern him.