

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Later:]

[Translation]

Mr. L. P. Antoine Belanger (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. I apologize for not giving him notice of my question.

Is the government contemplating action to protect Canadian seamen in danger of losing their jobs to American seamen, because of the dispute between the various seamen's unions?

[Text]

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of this particular aspect of the problem, namely that there is some threat to Canadian jobs from United States seamen. I have no information on that point. I would be glad to receive any, however.

GREAT LAKES—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT
ON PRESENT POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Will he make a statement regarding the negotiations or discussions that he has had with the secretary of labour of the United States? Furthermore, on the basis of discussions either with Mr. Wirtz or with labour union leaders has any settlement been arrived at with respect to the situation on the great lakes? It is very important that we have this information to know whether the government intends to proceed at once to take action to ratify certain suggestions of the Norris commission.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity provided by the Leader of the Opposition to say a word or two about this very important matter. The intention of the government at the present time is to proceed with the legislation setting up the trusteeship and I think that the resolution preliminary to the bill itself will appear on the notice paper tomorrow.

When I announced the decision of the government with respect to the public trusteeship I stated that the interval would provide an opportunity to search for a possible alternative method for a private settlement undertaken by the labour centres in Canada and the United States. We have used this interval to hold discussions directed toward that objective. On the week end we held a meeting

[Mr. MacEachen.]

in Boston with the secretary of labour of the United States and representatives of both the United States trade union movement and the Canadian trade union movement. From that meeting no solid foundation developed to lead us to believe that we can obviate the necessity of proceeding with this legislation.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think I should tell the house in all fairness that I have some faint hope that if we get a break in the next short time we may be in a different position in several days, but at the moment the decision is to proceed at the earliest possible opportunity, having given the necessary notice, with the trusteeship legislation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I thank the minister and ask him to tell the house what he meant by those words, "if we get a break"?

Mr. MacEachen: May I say, Mr. Speaker, that in these discussions there have been certain lines of possibility opened up on the week end, and if those lines lead to a fortunate consideration or decision there may be an alternative present itself. However, at the moment, I cannot give any assurance nor would I wish to mislead the house on that point. It was for this reason I wanted to indicate that possibility.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): May I ask a supplementary question? Would this possibility have the same desired effect as the recommendation of Mr. Justice Norris?

Mr. MacEachen: In my statement on August 1, I indicated that any substitute action would necessarily have to be effective action. When I use the word "effective" I mean that it would have the effect of restoring peace on the great lakes and on the waterfront, and provide for clean and democratic unionism.

Mr. Starr: What I was referring to in particular was the recommendation of Mr. Norris concerning the disposal of Mr. Banks as head of the union. Will this alternative now being contemplated have the same desired effect?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be prudent for me to go beyond the statement of these two particular objectives.

PENSIONS

INQUIRY AS TO CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION
THIS SESSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the statement he made on television last night will the