

Inquiries of the Ministry

association, or what action does he intend to take to prevent such an eventuality?

[English]

Hon. Martin P. O'Connell (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet personally seen that telegram. I could reiterate that there is a procedure available to both parties, jointly or singly, to have this dispute between them settled. That procedure is laid out in the Labour Code and is provided for in the collective agreement which was signed six or eight weeks ago.

QUEBEC—LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE—POLICY
RESPECTING PREVENTIVE MEDIATION—SUGGESTED
INTERVENTION BY MINISTER

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the minister. In view of the fact that the situation is reaching chronic proportions, in view of the fact that the public interest is now being adversely affected, and in view of the fact that the minister's predecessor started preventive mediation, is this still the present minister's policy, and can he assure the House that in view of the catastrophic disturbance now going on he will attend on the parties personally and use his personal influence in order to get these people back to the bargaining table?

• (1500)

Hon. Martin P. O'Connell (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure hon. members that it is our intention to continue and to reinforce and expand preventive mediation. I might point out that it was that very process which brought this model agreement into being which is now in such jeopardy. I want to reiterate that the procedure is there to be used, and that the two parties should make use of it. Mediation at this point simply takes them off the hook for failing to use the procedures they both agreed to use.

Mr. Alexander: In view of the fact that the minister does not believe that the public interest is being adversely affected yet—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that he cannot make that kind of statement. He was recognized again for the purpose of asking a supplementary question, but it seems to me that the preliminary statement is debate. I suggest to the hon. member that this is not procedurally correct. He can ask a supplementary question, of course.

Mr. Alexander: I accept your admonition, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Minister of Labour whether he is in receipt of a telegram from the employers dated around May 15 seeking arbitration and also seeking permission to prosecute under the law for violation of the terms of the agreement? If so, what has he done about it?

Mr. O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I did receive such a telegram but to the best of my memory it did not seek arbitration. Arbitration can be sought without asking the minister to provide it. The procedures are already there and both parties can agree to it. Arbitrators are designated in

[Mr. Valade.]

the agreement, they are available and they ought to be used. With respect to the second question on consent to prosecute, we have looked into that and declined because procedures are available other than prosecution which would not do the job.

[Translation]

QUEBEC—LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE—TELEGRAM FROM
QUEBEC TRUCKERS ASSOCIATION—POSITION OF
GOVERNMENT

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

For further clarification, I should like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether he did in fact receive a telegram from the Quebec Association of Teamsters this morning or yesterday, and whether he has communicated the contents to the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did receive such a telegram, signed by . . . I do not have the text in hand but I remember receiving a telegram and in the normal course of events the text will be forwarded to the minister, if this has not already been done.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will allow the hon. member for Sainte-Marie to ask a last supplementary question for very soon we shall be running short of time, unless we let other hon. members ask their questions.

Mr. Valade: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a question—

[English]

Mr. O'Connell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I think that the minister is rising on a point of order. I shall recognize the hon. member for Sainte-Marie as soon as the minister has explained why he is rising on a point of order.

[English]

The hon. minister rises on a point of order.

Mr. O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I have found that telegram and I will give it the urgent consideration to which it is entitled.

An hon. Member: Where was it?

[Translation]

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's answer, could he not be more consistent with himself and tell us what will be the contents and nature of the answer he intends to give—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question put in these terms is not acceptable.