

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. I want to ask the right hon. gentleman whether the shipping strike is affecting the progress of construction at Expo '67. Did the commissioner general of Expo '67 discuss the difficulty with the Prime Minister last week and, if so, with what result?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the commissioner did discuss the matter with me last week in connection with a ship which has material for Expo '67, and which it has not been possible to unload. As a result of further discussion between the commissioner and the Minister of Trade and Commerce I hope this difficulty has been overcome, but I shall be glad to look into the question.

Mr. George Muir (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance who is responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Could the minister tell us how many grain boats are waiting to load and unload at the port of Montreal?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that question without making inquiries, but I can say the matter is of the very greatest concern to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): As a further supplementary question, would the Minister of Finance supply us with those figures tomorrow morning?

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the difficulties that are now being experienced as a result of the strike of the longshoremen in Montreal, will the Prime Minister call the parties involved to Ottawa, to bring them into a different atmosphere so they may proceed to a settlement through the collective bargaining arrangement, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Marchand), who has a great deal of experience in this type of work?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, everything that can be done is being done to bring this strike to an end. The Minister of Labour is in touch with the situation, as my hon. friend knows, and if and when the time comes that the minister who is dealing with the matter feels

the intervention of the Prime Minister would be helpful, naturally he will let me know.

Mr. Diefenbaker: As a further supplementary, in view of the request which the Prime Minister received from the Montreal port council, in which the council stated that any further delay in settlement would be "catastrophic", is the government going to accede to the request of the council for immediate action to get shipping traffic moving and avoid further economic loss?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, action is being taken.

[Translation]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question somewhat similar to that which has just been directed to the Minister of Labour?

In view of the fact that yesterday and this morning I received reports from my constituency to the effect that elevators have only three-day supplies left and that our mills will have to stop operating, is the minister ready to take extraordinary and drastic steps so that the activity will be resumed on the wharves while negotiations are under way?

Mr. Speaker: The question of the member for Trois-Rivières is similar to that asked by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker).

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, may I bring up that question at ten o'clock to obtain further details.

[Later:]

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Labour, concerning his answer given yesterday to a question asked by the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette).

My question deals with Quebec farmers as regards the present longshoremen's strike. The minister told the house that the farmers could go to the harbours in order to get their own grain.

Did the minister receive any telegrams from various firms in Montreal, Trois-Rivières or Quebec city, to the effect that those truckers will find it difficult to drive through the picket lines in the harbours?

[English]

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad the hon. member has asked this question. I