

Is the minister in a position today to answer this question, which has a tremendous effect on the steel industry in Canada?

**Mr. Winters:** Mr. Speaker, I have looked into this matter quite carefully. I believe the Minister of National Revenue is prepared to answer, and if it is agreeable to the hon. member I would ask him to do so.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, we are now having an inquiry in respect of this alleged dumping by some exporting countries and I think I shall be in a position in a few days to make a more detailed report to the house.

[English]

### SHIPPING

#### REPORTED REFUSAL OF SHIPPERS TO USE ST. LAWRENCE PORTS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. J. R. Keays (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. In view of the firm refusal of large maritime shippers to accept cargoes to or from Montreal, Quebec city and Trois-Rivières during the coming season, does the minister anticipate taking any action, other than asking for studies, to reassure the people of those cities that goods can be received or sent out from these ports?

**Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, as I think the hon. member knows, negotiations between the shipping federation and the six or seven unions concerning the shipment of goods from the three St. Lawrence ports are still pending, with the assistance of the conciliation officer, since last January. A conciliation board has been requested. The names of the two nominees were received by me from the parties on February 23 and over the next week end the documents were prepared and signed appointing these two men and asking them to agree on a chairman.

In addition to this action, I might add that, pursuant to the assurance given to this house many months ago that on completion of the one inquiry into the activities of the ports in question there would be a second inquiry into the cause of work stoppages, I announced some days ago the appointment of Mr. Justice Arthur Smith of the Superior Court of Quebec to chair this second inquiry. That appointment has been confirmed officially. Hearings of this inquiry commission will begin, I hope

### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

early in March. I do not know what more the government can do at this stage.

**Mr. Graffey:** How about another task force to complete the delaying procedure?

**Mr. J. N. Ormiston (Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. He answered it partially a moment ago. Would it be possible for the minister to tell us what progress has been made in the conciliation talks between the St. Lawrence sea-way authority and its employees?

**Mr. Nicholson:** I have given a partial answer to that question, as the hon. member has said. The only thing that I can add is that the parties, in the course of their negotiations, are confronted with difficulties arising out of the interpretation of the Picard report, which I think one, if not both sides feel should after clarification be incorporated in the new agreements. I am not sure whether both parties wish arbitration on that point.

**Mr. Lewis:** They sure do. They have asked for it.

**Mr. Nicholson:** It is up to them. One side has asked for it, the other side asked for it and there was a slight delay and that request was withdrawn. I am making inquiries into this particular matter.

### AGRICULTURE

#### POTATOES—REQUEST FROM NEW BRUNSWICK FOR ASSISTANCE

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Hugh John Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Has the minister received a request from the government of New Brunswick concerning specific action the federal government might take to alleviate the distressed condition of the potato industry in that province?

**Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Agriculture):** I do not recall any specific request from that government which has been drawn to my attention, although the low price of potatoes in New Brunswick has been drawn to my attention. I do not believe there has been any specific government request in this regard.

**Mr. Flemming:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister undertake to inquire into the matter to see whether he has received such a request?