

*Labour Dispute at Montreal*

Then why do we have a Minister of Labour? What is the minister doing? What is his role if it is not to solve problems? The minister simply says that it is about time the parties should learn they must work out their own solution. Under the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour has nothing else to do here, the only thing he has to do is to resign and since he will no longer be available to help to settle disputes, the parties themselves will find their own solutions.

Why would the minister continue in office then? What else does he have to do? Mere red tape.

Yesterday, the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) asked the minister the following question:

Will the minister use the stature and importance of his office and summon both parties to Ottawa at once in order to help mediate an agreement on the understanding of the Picard report?

The minister answered:

No, Mr. Speaker.

So, the minister does not want to use the stature of his office and summon both parties in order to try to mediate an agreement on the understanding of the report.

What is the role of the minister in this case? Is he minister in name only and has nothing to do here? What is his role? The minister should give us an answer to that.

Mr. Speaker, if the Montreal harbour is at a complete standstill today and if everything is stopped, it is precisely because the minister did not take the matter seriously and preferred to tell the parties: I am non-existent, find your own solution yourselves, do not rely on me, I do not want to act in this case. Or, as he said yesterday: Both of you, management and labour try to settle your own differences alone, I do not want to assume the duties of a Minister of Labour any longer.

The results measure up to our expectations. Is the minister losing interest in the whole matter like he said himself yesterday, as shown clearly by the quotations I have just referred to.

Well, if the minister is completely disinterested in the matter, he has only one thing to do, that is to tender his resignation, since he is unwilling to play his role seriously.

I remember very well that last year, at the time of the strikes in British Columbia ports, the Minister of Labour had made a rousing appeal, asking everybody to settle that strike as quickly as possible, since the ships were loaded with perishables.

You remember, Mr. Speaker, that over a few hours delay, the minister had made charges of irresponsibility and called me irresponsible for refusing to accept one of his proposals with regard to the strike in British Columbia ports. He had called me irresponsible because those ships were loaded with perishable cargo, and the same situation prevails today. As the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot (Mr. Ricard) said so well, there is one million dollars' worth of perishables sitting there, and the hon. minister does not want to do anything.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am forced to turn on him the charge he levied against me last year and tell him in his turn that he is irresponsible in not wanting to do anything—since he used that expression last year—about the perishables which are piling up in the port of Montreal.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister does not want to act; he remains idle. It must be recognized that he is the one who used the word "irresponsibility" which applies so well to him today.

In the light of those facts, I feel that we are justified in requesting the resignation of the minister. Mr. Speaker, might it be that the hon. minister was eager to solve the problem in the ports of British Columbia last year because he comes from that province? However, when it is a problem concerning Quebec, the minister is no longer in a hurry, he merely says: "Let the parties learn to work out solutions among themselves; as for me, I will not get involved". When British Columbia is involved, special measures, special bills are quickly introduced before anyone can turn around. But when Quebec is involved, there is nothing to be done, and the minister says so: "I have no intention to step in." He also stated yesterday, and I quote:

I think it is about time they learned they must work out their own solutions.

Quebec is treated differently than the province represented by the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Speaker, such an attitude is unthinkable and unwarranted, and in closing, I call for the resignation of the Minister of Labour, who cannot do his job and who prefers to let things go unchecked rather than try to find solutions to the problems within his department.

**Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic):** Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of taking part in this debate, since quite a few members, from