

Inquiries of the Ministry

member's question, I must say that we have no intention whatsoever of changing the postal rates.

Mr. Fortin: I have a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker, we were not asking whether the government intended to change the postal rates, but whether the Post Office and Communications Departments would be ordered to make a study of the economic possibilities and the consequences of the new Post Office Act, for the information of hon. members.

Mr. Kierans: Perhaps we could discuss the consequences of the postal rates when the estimates of my department are considered, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

LABOUR RELATIONS**VANCOUVER—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBLE STRIKE OF LONGSHOREMEN**

Mr. A. B. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Is the minister aware of the very real danger of a longshoremen's strike this summer at the port of Vancouver? If so, what action is he taking to try to prevent it?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am always aware of the possibility, since their collective agreement expires at the end of July. On the other hand, I am not as pessimistic as the hon. member. I think both parties appreciate the futility of a long and costly strike in that particular port this summer.

WHEAT—DESIRABILITY OF AVOIDING RESTRICTED MOVEMENT THROUGH STRIKE ACTION

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): In the absence of the Prime Minister, I will direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. In light of today's Richardson's Grain Marketing Review stating that no offers of wheat were made this week to the Japanese food agency by the Canadian Wheat Board because of the distinct possibility of a strike in the very near future by the Vancouver port longshoremen, will the Prime Minister use his good offices to prevent this threatened strike, and thus avert making even more serious what is already recognized as a serious grain pile-up?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the government is very much aware of the desirability

of continuing the shipment of grain and preventing any strikes. I am sure the Minister of Labour, who is one of the more effective negotiators we have had in our time, will do a good job.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, both ministers said they are aware of the danger of a strike. What really is being asked the ministers is what action or policy the government has to prevent such a hold-up at the ports, which would of course cause another deterioration in our grain market?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this government does not adopt the policy that there are two types of workers, those entitled to strike legitimately and those who are not. The longshoremen in British Columbia have a very legitimate right to strike, provided they meet the full requirements of the law as presently enunciated on the statute books. I am not quite sure whether the hon. member suggests we should order the companies to give the unions all they want, or order the unions to accept the terms that the companies think are valid in this time and age.

Mr. Woolliams: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As a member of the opposition, I am not suggesting anything. I am asking the minister what his policy is. He says the labourers have rights: Surely the farmers have some rights. I ask him—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has already asked a question. I am not sure he is satisfied with the reply given by the minister, but he has already asked the question.

Mr. Woolliams: Maybe I could rephrase it in a little more gracious manner, with your assistance, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the minister could give us any positive suggestions as to what he has in mind by way of keeping in balance his views on fair play and a due consideration of what is necessary for the economics of the country?

Mr. Mackasey: I think I should answer graciously, Mr. Speaker, and assure the hon. member that the one thing we should not do at this moment is panic. This is the type of advice I can give to the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Woolliams: One thing about this government, they never move until there is a crisis.