

*Oral Questions***LABOUR RELATIONS**REQUEST BY CANADIAN LAKE CARRIERS ASSOCIATION FOR
INTRODUCTION OF BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. Would he confirm that he met with representatives of the Canadian Lake Carriers Association, that the discussion included a request by the association for back-to-work legislation, and that this occurred in the new year, prior to the commencement of labour negotiations between the association and the Canadian Marine Officers Union? Would the minister not feel that this could be prejudicial to the bargaining in good faith between those two groups?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. My recollection is that I met with representatives of the Canadian Lake Carriers Association earlier in the year. They made representations in relation to the reforms in legislation they would like to see. I do not recall them talking about any back-to-work legislation. In any event I certainly made no commitment on any of the representations they made to me at that time.

Mr. McKnight: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. He has already admitted to meeting with that association prior to the commencement of negotiations between the carriers association and the marine officers. They requested legislation from him regarding back-to-work rules and changes they wish to see in the contract. Does he feel that is conducive to bargaining in good faith between two parties in Canada? Will he continue to deny what the union is saying, that they feel this is bargaining in bad faith on behalf of the association?

Mr. Regan: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is on one of those not so passive Sable Island ponies galloping to conclusions.

Mr. McKnight: It is better than riding the dead horse which the minister is on.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: Well, the hon. member is a leading authority on dead horses, when he sees the policies of this party on the Constitution at the present time; there is no question about that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: In regard to this particular dead horse, it would do him well to stop beating it. The discussion I had with the representatives of the Lake Carriers Association was the same as the discussion I have had with labour or management groups from time to time. It did not relate to any contract discussions. To the best of my knowledge, I was not asked anything about back-to-work legislation. But the hon. member should be familiar, from my previous utterances on the matter, with the fact that I believe back-to-work legislation is very

much a last resort, only when the social need of the country is so great that it is required.

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TRANSPORTEFFECT OF OUTCOME OF LABOUR NEGOTIATIONS ON
MOVEMENT OF GRAIN

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It has to do with the concern of many of us over the present situation with regard to the marine officers union negotiations. At two recent meetings marine officers voted unanimously to reject the company's offers. Is the minister aware of this situation? Does he have any contingency plans to see that grain moves during a possible strike? I think this is very important in view of the fact that we can have a record shipping season because, as we all know, the Seaway will be open a week early this year.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, it is well known that I am a natural worrier; I worry about everything, and this particularly. Of course the grain situation is dependent upon the labour front. I inquired yesterday about that very subject, and I was given the impression that things were going reasonably well.

● (1440)

I was cheered by the settlement which was achieved at the Port of Montreal, for example. I follow the paper every night to see the good accomplishments made in terms of keeping peace on the labour front with respect to grain transportation.

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR GRAIN SHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. It also has to do with grain transportation. I think the minister will be aware that a year ago there was the distinct possibility that Canada would be short approximately a million tons in its shipping on the Great Lakes. The thing that really saved our bacon in that situation was the American embargo, which freed some American shippers.

Has the minister had a chance to have discussions with officials of the Canadian Wheat Board with respect to preventing that from happening in the future? Has he discussed such things as long-term contracting, which the Wheat Board should be considering with some of the shippers? What can the minister tell us about that situation so that we do not again get trapped into not having enough shipping available to move the grain we are capable of producing?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will have a conversation with the minister responsible for the Wheat Board as early as I can arrange it, and I will report to the hon. member.