

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 18, 1964

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

LABOUR RELATIONS

HAL BANKS—ANNOUNCEMENT OF REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the Minister of Labour has a communication he wishes to make at this time.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed today by the chairman of the board of trustees, Hon. Mr. Justice V. L. Dryer, that after long consideration of the affairs and interests of the S.I.U. of Canada and of the maritime industry, the trustees have determined that it is not in the interests of that union, of the shipping industry of Canada nor of the public at large that Mr. H. C. Banks remain in office.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacEachen: Accordingly, and in keeping with the powers given to them by parliament under the Maritime Transportation Unions Trustees Act, the trustees have today removed Mr. Banks from the position he has occupied as president of the S.I.U. of Canada. The trustees have named Mr. Charles Turner, a former officer and still a member of the brotherhood of railway and steamship clerks, freight handlers and express and station employees, who has been on the staff of the board of trustees for two months, to serve as president of the S.I.U. of Canada. He will continue in this position until other arrangements are made. Mr. Charles H. Millard has moved into the offices in the S.I.U. of Canada building in Montreal, and the union will be administered under his direct supervision. The trustees will continue their overall direction of the five unions under trusteeship.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): We have listened with interest, Mr. Speaker, to the statement made by the Minister of Labour. I recall that yesterday I posed a question to the minister as to whether there was any truth in the allegation that Mr. Banks would be relieved of his position as president of the S.I.U. in accordance with an agreement between the S.I.U., the United States government and the Canadian government. The minister said yesterday he was not aware of

this situation. It seems to me that there must have been more truth than fiction in the rumour that was prevalent as late as yesterday. I am also led to believe that the minister is not revealing all the facts with regard to this situation and that the Ottawa government must have played some part in connection with the decision in this matter.

I believe that most of us who were in the house when the trustees were appointed felt that they would carry out the recommendations of the Norris report, because it was as a result of those recommendations that the trusteeship was originally established. The purpose was to settle the situation on the great lakes. However, the trustees, until this action today, have not felt it was necessary to follow the Norris recommendations, and this has led to dissatisfaction on the part of many people who have felt that in order to clean up the great lakes situation the trustees should in fact follow the Norris recommendations.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): I am sure all members of the house greeted the announcement made by the minister with a good deal of enthusiasm. It is certainly a first step that has been needed for a long time. I wonder if the minister would give consideration to calling the industrial relations committee together at an early date so that members could get further reports from the board of trustees about their future plans for rectifying other matters upon which action is needed.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, the house obviously expected that the time would come when the Minister of Labour would announce the expulsion of Mr. Banks as president of the seafarers' union after all that has been going on for a certain number of years.

On the other hand, the Minister of Labour also announced the appointment of a president who will take over the administration of the union. That president was appointed by the trustees. I would therefore have a reservation to make about that appointment. I should like it to be ratified by a general meeting of all members of the union concerned, because even if it is justified, that action on the part of the trustees is still subject to the approval of the workers concerned.