

*Inquiries of the Ministry***LABOUR RELATIONS****QUEBEC—STOPPAGE OF WORK BY
LONGSHOREMEN**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): I wish to address a question to the Minister of Labour and ask him whether he has received a telegram from Mr. Gerard Tremblay, the Atlantic coast district vice president of the international longshoremen's association, denying that the 15 per cent of the longshoremen whom the federation is seeking to dismiss are casual employees and asserting that many of them are workers who are not yet old enough to receive pensions but who are too old to work more than part time. Has the minister, or has Judge Lippe, had an opportunity to examine the statistics which are available in the central records bureau of the St. Lawrence river ports?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I did not receive a telegram along those lines today; I received one yesterday. I think a word of explanation is in order in view of the fact that I mentioned a test of 15 or 16 weeks work yesterday. It has to do with hours worked, not weeks, averaging out. It comes to about 15 or 16 weeks.

This is a matter which could, I think, be referred to Judge Lippe for consideration and advice. I certainly will give it serious attention before I speak to the mediator later today.

Mr. Douglas: May I ask the minister whether the statement made in the telegram from Mr. Tremblay is correct, that so far the shipping federation of Canada has not replied to the written submission made by the longshoremen's association, that no reply whatever has been made to the offer submitted?

Mr. Nicholson: Technically that may be correct. However, both sides submitted proposals to me and I in turn, out of the proposals which came to me, made suggestions to the two parties which I asked them to consider. I think the longshoremen's association can certainly take it from the remarks I made late on Sunday night that they had received a reply from the shipping federation. There has been a certain amount of by-play, as there is in all negotiations. It was to try to put an end to this that I adopted the course I did.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I should like to ask the minister in reference to his statement yesterday that a fantastic offer of

[Mr. Speaker.]

wage increases had been made by the federation, whether he communicated the actual offer by the federation to the union, or whether the offer he made to the association was something other than that about which the federation had privately informed him.

Mr. Nicholson: It is difficult to answer a question of that kind on the orders of the day. I could give an extended answer but I cannot deal with the point in two or three sentences.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Would it not be a good idea if the minister were to answer these various questions and deal with the matters raised in this telegram? After all, I understand that the Prime Minister has received a warning from the Montreal port council that any further delay in bringing about settlement of this strike would be "catastrophic". Would it not be a good idea if the house would permit the minister to revert to motions so that we might hear something about this and ascertain the facts?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Sainte-Marie.

[Translation]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour.

Is the minister aware of the fact that the longshoremen's strike could be settled very soon, if he gave them the assurance that there will be no decrease in personnel until December 31, 1967?

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think that question is argumentative.

Mr. Valade: May I rephrase my question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister intend to propose to the longshoremen as a solution that no decrease in personnel will be made until December 31, 1967, in order to end the strike?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will admit that it is the same question, put in English.