

LABOUR CONDITIONS—POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO
LEGISLATION TO PROTECT UNION MEMBERS FROM
DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT BY UNIONS

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, twice recently I have raised the question relating to hiring hall practices with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) suggesting, on December 16, that the minister consider amending the Canada Shipping Act which deals with this subject, and also suggesting that the minister take a look at Part V of the Canada Labour Code with regard to making it easier for union members to seek redress for any abuses which they may incur within their own unions. I refer the minister to the editorial in yesterday's *Ottawa Citizen* in support of this contention, and I would also like to point out that the recommendations of Mr. Justice Norris about the same hiring hall practices have still not been acted upon even after ten years.

All this is in the general context of the practices of the Seafarers' International Union, and I do not wish to go into detail at this time about the various sections that are involved in the Canada Shipping Act and the Canada Labour Code. They are, or should be, well known to the minister, as Mr. Speaker properly pointed out on another occasion. But in view of the need for an improved procedure to safeguard union members and to encourage them to come forward to speak out against improper labour practices, I want to put on record some observations related to this topic and to the SIU.

The Hon. George Kerr, solicitor general of Ontario, said in a recent news release that police so far have conducted over 225 interviews with members of the SIU. Most of those interviews indicated that assaults and beatings were taking place within the union. The minister went on to say further that his department had encountered great reluctance on the part of union members to come forward to give evidence relating to acts of violence or other wrongdoing, because of a general atmosphere of intimidation and reprisal within the organization.

It seems incredible to me that the federal government, particularly with some of its key ministers having some connection with the SIU, either past or present, does not welcome the opportunity to have a full and open inquiry so that the situation may be fully dealt with and any necessary reforms instituted.

I want to put on the record that on November 14, 1973, an illegal picket line was put up around the motor vessel *Ontario* owned by Bomar Navigation, and when a solicitor, accompanied by a photographer and a shipping executive, went to the scene to see the reason for the illegal picketing, a gang led by Roy Willis, who is well known within SIU circles as a strong man in the Toronto area, assaulted the solicitor and shipping executive, and only the intervention of the harbour police saved them from serious harm.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour, and through him his fellow cabinet members, why they are taking so casually the observations of Mr. Justice Norris that the present president of the SIU is not his own man and is being controlled by outside interests. I presume that by "outside interests" we are talking about the American arm of the union, and its head office based in New York under Mr. Paul Hall.

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I should also like to ask the minister when he intends to inform the House and the public why the union finds it necessary to have individuals in its employ and prominent in its Montreal operations, like Ken McGuire, George Baldo and Ron Diamond, who are well known to the police over a long period of time? And why is it so difficult for anyone investigating to find out the exact nature of their difficulties with the law and the disposition of the various charges?

I have some information that I will give to the minister. I am curious to see how far he will go on his own to show that he and his colleagues are really interested in checking into what makes the SIU tick, and why it is such a controversial union.

Let me say this to him, that Mr. McGuire is well known to be from the McGuire-Point St. Charles gang. These men are well known underground figures. They have had encounters with the police over the last 15 years, and are known to the police as union strong arm men. Mr. Rod Diamond has a record. I am only dealing with people who have records. I am not going to bring up SIU people who have only been charged. His record shows breaking entering and theft, possession of stolen goods, and keeping a bawdy house. Mr. George Baldo's accomplishments include breaking and entering with intent, possession of burglary tools, found in a gaming house, assault occasioning bodily harm, damage to property, and dangerous driving.

Surely with this prompting the minister will show a little initiative and check into these names which I have provided to him. Perhaps he would also be good enough to check into the incident I mentioned earlier about the illegal picket line. If I understand the minister's position, and the government's position, they are asking members of the opposition to give them facts. I am now giving them a few facts, and I would be interested in how they act on those before I divulge any more.

I would also be interested in whether the minister will give us some firm assurance that, in view of the apparent abuses existing within the SIU, he is serious about taking his responsibilities in hand to protect hardworking individual members of the SIU rather than treating their complaints in what I consider may well be a casual manner, or referring them to the Canada Labour Relations Board which cannot hear complaints unless several prerequisites are observed. Incidentally, it would be interesting to know if the minister proposes to fill a vacancy which I understand exists on this Canada Labour Relations Board at this particularly critical time and in regard to which the Solicitor General of Ontario has stated:

The allegations which have attracted public attention are concerned not solely with individual criminal occurrences, but relate to the general conduct of the union and its effect upon the civil rights, freedom of choice and working conditions of the members.

This is the point that concerns me, and I certainly hope that the Minister of Labour will look into all the various responsibilities and duties that he has to control. This is an international union, but it should be his aim to make working conditions better and easier for members of the rank and file who, I believe, may be suffering abuse because of the conditions which exist within the union. I believe this should be looked into immediately.