

Labour Dispute at Montreal

television just before that; then the bill was withdrawn for reasons which are beyond me, unless there was pressure from some of the labour groups from whom that party gets support.

I have not very much to say about strikes. As I said before, I am from western Canada and I do not represent a high percentage of labour. I am opposed to strikes when they affect innocent people, and I am afraid this is one of those cases. If the longshoremen and the shipping companies have a dispute, then certainly there must be some means of settling that dispute. I believe the fact that this strike is affecting innocent persons is one of the most important reasons for the minister to step in and take some action. This is the only way these innocent people can be protected. I hope that in the course of his remarks the minister will say something about the effect of this strike on western grain shipments.

Mr. J. E. Pascoe (Moose Jaw-Lake Centre): As a western member and the representative of a grain growing area, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments at this point. I will be brief since the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek outlined the situation fairly well. However, there are a few more points I should like to make. I want to join with other speakers in urging a quick settlement of this dispute which is tying up shipping in the port of Montreal. The hon. member for Ontario posed some very important questions which I hope the minister will try to answer.

I wanted to mention the latest report of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. I feel this is in order, Mr. Speaker, because the report refers to wheat shipments through the port of Montreal. Reference has been made already, of course, to the fact there has been a slump in grain exports this year. I am sorry the Minister of Trade and Commerce is not here because he always has a cheerful outlook on the situation. He says it is going to improve. Perhaps it will improve, but it cannot improve unless the dispute at the port of Montreal is settled, because a lot of grain does move through that port.

I should like to refer to this report by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for November 1, 1967. The period covered is from August 1 to November 1 of this year, during which time we shipped through St. Lawrence ports, that is Sorel, Trois-Rivières, Quebec but mostly Montreal, and through other Canadian ports, just over 60 million bushels of wheat.

[Mr. McIntosh.]

Last year was just an ordinary year, but during the same period from August 1 to November 1 we shipped nearly 156 million bushels. I do not blame the present dispute in the port of Montreal for this drop in exports; I blame a lack of effort on the part of the government in getting out and selling our wheat.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce says he is going to sell wheat in the near future; that is the hope he holds out. If he does, then the operation of the port of Montreal will become very necessary in order that this wheat may be moved. I just wanted to emphasize the interest of western members in the settlement of this dispute. I hope the questions posed by the hon. member for Ontario will impress upon the government the seriousness of the situation.

• (12:30 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the present crisis in the port of Montreal and mention especially that I am surprised at the attitude of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) concerning the conflict.

Indeed, the Minister of Labour seems to approach this problem in a rather surprising way. Yesterday, he stated in the house, and I quote his own words reported on page 4598 of *Hansard* of Thursday, November 23:

The parties must learn that they should try to work out their own differences.

That is what the minister said.

That is not a labour conflict that was created by the parties, it is rather a conflict that arose from the report of a commission appointed by the government and the Minister of Labour.

If there is a conflict at the present time in the port of Montreal, it is due to the report of a commission appointed by the government and the minister is trying to evade the responsibility by saying:

The parties must learn that they should try to work out their own differences.

A little further down the same page, the minister added:

The parties have their rights, but they have not attempted to exercise them in the manner agreed upon. They are looking to the government to impose a solution. I think it is about time they learned they must work out their own solutions.

The minister says: "It is high time the parties should learn they must work out their own solution."