

Labour Dispute at Montreal

someone else to decide what is to be done. The government in this crisis surely has a responsibility to rectify the situation at once.

We said the legislation was based on an assumption; how were we to know what the report would be? How could we agree to that report being imposed as part of the collective bargaining agreement? We voted against this bill because of that. On page 7674 of *Hansard* for July 14, 1966 I am reported to have said:

This legislation is based on assumption. The government is assuming that the recommendations will be acceptable to both parties.

The recommendations are not acceptable to both parties, and we were right. Continuing:

What will be the situation if the recommendations are not acceptable?

We have that situation now. There is chaos on the Montreal docks, and that chaos will probably spread across the country to other docks. The union members will not sit idly by and see this type of recommendation imposed on their fellow members. Sympathetic gestures by other union members will be made, as the Minister of Manpower and Immigration well knows. Continuing to quote, I am reported to have said:

Will that tend to a happy and harmonious situation between these two parties for the duration of the present agreement?

There is no happy and harmonious situation which at that time the government thought there would be. Continuing:

This is almost prophetic legislation. We do not know what is going to be recommended but we are being asked to put unknown recommendations into effect.

After that warning the government, on receipt of the report, without consulting both sides as is the normal practice under collective agreements, imposed an arbitrary piece of legislation. Surely that was the most arbitrary decision that could have been taken. I say the present crisis on the Montreal waterfront arises directly from that legislation which the government passed on July 15. Consequently I and many others feel that the government has a responsibility in this situation, but the government does not accept that.

In the legislation the government imposed on unions and management the terms of the Picard report, which then had not been written. In July 1966, during the debate, we were assured by the Minister of Labour and the present Minister of Manpower and Immigration that the unwritten recommendations of

the Picard report, which were to be included sight unseen in Bill C-215, would be acceptable. That assurance was given in this house, but the fact is that those recommendations are not acceptable.

By its mismanagement the government in this instance has occasioned the spoilage of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of goods. I mention this because I wish to show the insubstantial and contradictory nature of the minister's position. He cannot be allowed his attitude of being almost a hundred light years away from what is taking place on the Montreal docks. Yesterday I asked him whether he would assume the responsibility of calling both parties to Ottawa at once to try to bring about some understanding and acceptance of this report. That is all that can be done in the circumstances. The government cannot sit idly by and allow events to develop without taking action. Calling the parties to Ottawa for consultation is the only reasonable and the only responsible approach the government should take at this time. After all, they introduced the bill and imposed the terms of the report.

At the time the bill was passed the union had never agreed to the incredible proposal of accepting something which was as then unwritten. Nevertheless the government went ahead, and it went ahead without the agreement of the union or management. The government shoved the bill through and we voted against it. The government have a responsibility to act, and they must exercise that responsibility.

I wish the Acting Prime Minister would not adopt a light hearted attitude and smile. The situation is most serious.

• (11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a question of privilege, the government is taking this matter very seriously. The government wants this matter discussed today. I was just exchanging friendly glances with the right hon. gentleman who sits to the hon. member's left.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: I thought when he was smiling the Acting Prime Minister was looking at me. Maybe I was wrong.

This is not only a matter for discussion, Mr. Speaker. There is a responsibility which lies upon the government and the purpose in drawing attention to the situation is to get them to take some action. It is not sufficient that we should discuss this matter for the

[Mr. Starr.]