summer of 1966. The collective agreements between the shipping federation and the longshoremen in the St. Lawrence ports had expired on December 31, 1965. The parties had some discussions and in April, 1966 they asked for the establishment of a conciliation board. The minister has not only the right but the duty to establish a conciliation board when such action is requested. Within a matter of hours of the time that request was received a conciliation board was established. On the very day that the representative of management and the representative of the workers asked for the appointment of a chairman I appointed a chairman. The hearings began but quickly broke down. Hon. members will recall that within a matter of hours of the breakdown of negotiations in early May of last year I was able to persuade the man I regarded as best equipped to mediate the situation to step in. I refer to Judge Lippe. He knew the problems and he had acted in a similar situation in 1963, at which time he had done an outstanding job.

Judge Lippe took this job on and after he had been at it a few days—this is of importance to those people who are so critical, and I am not referring to hon. members only but to the public generally—he said that the longshoremen had asked for a substantial increase in wages to be incorporated in the new agreement. He said that the employers seemed prepared to give them what they were asking for the year 1966 and that they would extend this into the year 1967 in return for an assurance of greater productivity during the second year.

Judge Lippe in his capacity as mediator worked on this dispute trying to bring about some assurance of increased productivity. When those efforts failed I, as minister, moved in again within a matter of hours of the time Judge Lippe asked me to do so. I invited the parties to come to Ottawa to see me. They met with me and others of my colleagues, and we were in session for several hours one afternoon extending into the early part of the following day. We met again on Sunday and again the matter was adjourned, but progress was made in narrowing the issues.

Let me indicate how difficult it is for a minister of labour, particularly a minister with my background—the only small bit of work I have done on the labour side was done when I was a lawyer acting for labour, and my association with labour-management negotiations was on the management side—to settle these matters. When I was reporting to the house that progress had been made we ran into great difficulty because someone during our talks said that the demands of the union without increased productivity were fantastic. I did not say they were fantastic, but this was the view taken by some responsible people.

The issues had been narrowed and some two weeks later along with three of my colleagues I met with representatives and we were in session with them at separate caucuses and jointly from nine o'clock in the morning on Saturday until nearly six o'clock the following morning, twenty and three-quarter hours without a break. We still were not able to bring about an agreement.

We held a further meeting the next day, on the Monday, when a proposal was made that if the parties could agree on the monetary points—wage increases and fringe benefits—there would be nothing left to settle except job security, which presented a difficulty, and we indicated that we would consider at a later date the introduction of legislation to appoint a commissioner who would take his time in inquiring into this whole matter thoroughly. He was to deal with job security and his findings might be binding and made part of the collective agreements.

When that settlement was reached the minutes drawn up in my office in this building made reference to the fact that collective agreements were to be drawn, which could be modified by agreement or otherwise. These facts came out during the lengthy debate last year. The interesting thing is that while objections were raised when this matter came before parliament in July of last year, and reference was made to this by the hon. member for Ontario and others this morning, the representatives of the unions concerned made it clear that they had not asked for what in effect would be compulsory arbitration. They had assured me and my colleagues in no uncertain terms, however, that being good citizens they would obey the law if such a law was passed.

Mr. Starr: They always say that.

Mr. Nicholson: It should be borne in mind that these interim agreements were drawn up in June of last year and that just a few months ago, after the Picard commission had been working for the better part of a year, the minutes of the settlements were reduced to formal documents and signed by both parties. There is a whole series of collective