

*Inquiries of the Ministry***LABOUR RELATIONS****LAKEHEAD GRAIN HANDLERS DISPUTE—INQUIRY AS TO SETTLEMENT**

Mr. Peters: Possession of the ball seems to be the criterion, but it seems to me that all members on that committee are equal and that the rules should not be changed in the middle of its work. I would hope that consideration will be given to this question by the house leaders very shortly.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned about the situation that has prevailed in that committee for some time. The bill, and it is an important one, has been before the committee and the House for more than a year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: I believe that more than 140 meetings of the standing committee have been held, about 300 witnesses have been heard, and more than 3,000 printed pages of evidence have been taken. If we are interested in enhancing the reputation of Parliament it seems to me we ought to do something about a situation that has been caused by the attitude of one or two members of the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: May I ask the government House leader if he considers committee by exhaustion to be a solution to this problem?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Battle River has a supplementary and after that I suggest that we move on to another subject. It seems to me we are spending most of our question period on two or three subjects, and we will soon be running short of time.

Mr. Cliff Downey (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government House leader if it has not come to his mind, and to the minds of other members of the government, that possibly the legislation which the agricultural committee is studying is the reason for all the trouble, that basically it is at fault and should be withdrawn?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, if I may make one comment, and I shall attempt to be brief, I do not believe that exhaustion or the process of exhaustion is an ideal solution to the deliberations of the House or of a committee, but I believe that hon. members will agree that when one extreme position is taken in the House it inevitably leads to another, and that is the situation that we have in the committee. I would say that after a year of intensive debate and discussion the committee and the House should be allowed to take a decision by a majority even though a minority is opposed to the bill. That is the principle upon which this Parliament is based, on the opportunity of the majority to make a decision.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Minister of Labour or his parliamentary secretary. In view of the lengthy and worrisome negotiations between the management and the workers in the grain handlers union at the Lakehead, can any report be made on that dispute, has a settlement been reached and, if so, what are the terms of the settlement?

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this is not the minister's roster day. However, I would be pleased to suggest that the question be redirected to the government House leader who may wish to answer on behalf of the minister today.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the government House leader if he can report whether any settlement has been reached in the negotiations between management and the employees who are members of the grain handlers union at the Lakehead and whether the report of the conciliation board has been made public and agreed to by both sides?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am wondering about the direction of the question. As hon. members know, a question can be directed to a minister only to the extent that he has responsibility for the administration of a department. However, it may be that the President of the Privy Council is the acting minister today and in that capacity might be allowed to reply to the hon. member's question.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I cannot locate the note that I brought into the House but I can tell the hon. member that a settlement has been reached in this important dispute involving about 1,600 handlers at the Lakehead. Settlement has been reached at the conciliation stage, and I believe the House would want me to congratulate all those involved on reaching a solution at that stage of the dispute.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I direct a supplementary question to the government House leader in that the original question was relayed to him because the Minister of Labour was not on the roster today. It is obvious from the most recent release concerning the roster system that the President of the Privy Council, who is the government House leader, is also not supposed to be here today. Is this the first break in the roster system that has been introduced and which is destroying Parliament?

VANCOUVER TRAINMEN'S WORK SLOWDOWN—ACTION TO SETTLE DISPUTE AND ASSURE GRAIN MOVEMENT

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the government House leader or the Prime Minister. In view of the urgent necessity of moving grain to export positions, can we have an early