

Inquiries of the Ministry

together? As the minister said the other day, while the foremen could not qualify under the Canada labour act in constituting a collective bargaining unit, there is nothing to prevent the employers from bargaining with them if they so choose. Could not a mediator try to resolve that point and in the meantime get the men back to work by getting the company to call the work gangs?

Mr. Nicholson: I thought it was understood that the company had called out the work gangs, and they are still willing to take back any of the employees who have been dismissed by some of the foremen, and otherwise, for allegedly not performing their duties. The company says that if the men are prepared to give a full day's work for a full day's pay, it will be glad to take them back. There is no dispute about that.

Answering the second part of the question—and while in Vancouver last week, I passed this information on to local 514 and to the international and local officers of the I.L.W.U. in British Columbia—that each one of the stevedoring companies had said it is quite prepared either collectively or individually, to deal with the foremen in their own employ, but the management of one company does not want to deal with the foremen of another company. That is the position being taken by the employers.

Mr. Douglas: Would not a mediator find some solution to this point?

Mr. Speaker: That question, I suggest, is argumentative.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister of Labour is having problems with this matter, would he not agree that if some of the stevedores are affected that is proof that no strike is in motion, and that a lockout is the only other possible description of what is happening?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, no one has suggested, except in questions put by ill informed people, that there is a strike. But there has been the suggestion of a lockout. However, the employers say, "I am prepared to take men back if they are prepared to give a full day's work in return for a day's pay," so what proof is that of a lockout?

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): When the employer says that he will bring men back

to work if they give a full day's work for a full day's pay, is he not imposing conditions of employment that can only be determined when the men are on the job?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure all hon. members agree that we have had ample questions and answers, and perhaps a debate, on the subject. It might be time to go to another subject matter.

Mr. Howard: I posed a question to the Prime Minister about the specific aspect of an emergency, and an airlift to isolated communities. I wonder if the right hon. gentleman could reply.

Mr. Pearson: I apologize to my hon. friend; I had not realized at the time that the question was addressed to me. In view of the very serious aspect of the situation I will certainly take his comments under consideration.

[Translation]

FINANCE

DIFFICULTIES OF PRUDENTIAL FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue.

In view of the bankruptcies declared in Ontario, for which the Prudential Finance Corporation Limited and its subsidiary companies are responsible—which bankruptcies involved the loss of some \$60 million—can the minister inform the house if he has received from one Mr. Gruberg, of Toronto, representations accompanied by affidavits, with regard to the fact that this company had committed certain irregularities? If so, does he intend to take the necessary steps so that an inquiry may be made into the matter?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): I really cannot see that it has very much to do with the Minister of National Revenue if a firm goes bankrupt—unless, of course, they go bankrupt paying their income tax. I have not received any such representations to my knowledge.