

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, it appears that arising out of the settlement made last August it was agreed that certain retroactive wage payments should be made to the longshoremen. I am informed that the purpose of the walkout is to speed up the process of payment, and that at the present time Vancouver officers of the Department of Labour are close to the situation and will render any assistance possible in the resumption of work.

CHARGE AGAINST HAL BANKS—INQUIRY AS TO ARREST

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice arising out of the answer he gave to a member's question on Thursday with reference to the charges laid against Banks. Is the minister sure that a charge has been laid against Banks? If the answer is yes, then I ask him why Banks was not arrested at that time, and why is he not out on bail according to legal practice.

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest to the hon. member that the first part of his question was very good, but the second part was completely out of order.

Mr. Woolliams: May I rephrase the question and put it in this way. Why was Banks not arrested at the time the charge was laid, and why was he not released on bail?

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the part that the Speaker said was out of order, but the hon. member got it in. So far as the first part of the question is concerned, my statement in the house on Thursday was quite clear and it stands as it was made.

Mr. Woolliams: On a question of privilege, surely that is a proper question, and surely the House of Commons is entitled to know the answer. The Minister of Justice stated on Thursday that a proper charge involving an indictable offence had been laid against Hal Banks, and surely the House of Commons is entitled to know what the situation is. According to newspaper reports Banks has now disappeared, and surely we are entitled to know how he happened to disappear before he was arrested and why he was not brought before the bar of justice and a proper application made for bail, so that if he was to be at large he would be at large under a proper bail order.

Some hon. Members: Order.

[Mr. Herridge.]

Mr. Woolliams: My hon. friends say "order". I do not know how many Speakers there are in this house or what colour they are, and so on.

Mr. Chevrier: I am just wondering whether this is a question or a speech by the hon. member for Bow River. I did say on Thursday that on the advice of counsel appointed to consider the evidence in connection with the Norris report, a charge had been laid against Hal Banks in Montreal for conspiracy to commit an assault occasioning bodily harm upon Captain Walsh. Now, this is a fact, whether my hon. friend likes it or not, it is a fact. I do not believe it is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice to give a blow by blow account to the house as to the intentions of the special prosecutor or the police so that those who may be charged will know exactly what the next blow is. I do not believe that is my responsibility, and I have no intention of doing so.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): May I ask a supplementary question. Counsel was appointed in the person of Mr. Martineau. Who laid the information? What date was it laid? How was it that the prosecutor himself, specially appointed to look after this, had no knowledge of the laying of the charge?

Mr. Chevrier: In so far as the last part of the question is concerned, I cannot accept that as being factual; because I have before me a statement which appeared in the *Toronto Star* of November 2, quoting Mr. Martineau as follows:

Today Mr. Martineau told the *Star* that all he said was, if the minister said a charge had been laid, it must be correct.

Mr. Diefenbaker: He said it had not been.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Surely the house is entitled to know whether a charge was laid, before whom the charge was laid, on what date the charge was laid, and whether or not a warrant for Mr. Banks' arrest has been issued.

Mr. Chevrier: Well, Mr. Speaker, a number of those questions have already been answered. The charge was laid in Montreal. It was laid against Mr. Banks. It was laid on October 23, and on October 31 search warrants were issued arising out of these charges. In so far as the last part of the question is concerned, I do not believe it is in the public interest to give that information.

[Later:]

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): I wanted to ask the Minister of Justice if a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Hal C. Banks,