

Pacific Coast Longshoremen Dispute

involving management and labour until every opportunity has been given to arrive at a settlement without his intervention. But, Mr. Speaker, having acknowledged that fact, we must state that we believe the time has now arrived when definite action must be taken. This action cannot be postponed; we cannot wait for the ordinary methods and means of negotiation and conciliation to take their course.

As has been pointed out this morning on a number of occasions, one of the main problems is the absence of established procedures to solve these disputes in vital industries of this nation. This is something to which attention must be given. I do not believe we can afford to wait for this question to be worked out and for the matter to be discussed.

Suggestions have also been made that the minister ought to go out to the west coast and appoint a mediator immediately. I do not think we can even wait for that. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the time has now come—as the time came in other disputes—when legislation must be introduced. Unless this matter is resolved immediately, legislation must be considered so as to get the ports of the west coast opened again and shipping once more under way.

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my intervention in this debate will be very brief. I listened to the very reasoned argument of the minister, who I have always found to be a reasonable person. But he did not give me the impression he considered this a matter of the utmost importance—as a matter of fact, as a crisis.

Other hon. members have described the effect of this strike or lock-out whatever you want to call it, on the prairies and on the fruit industry of British Columbia. The wood products industry of British Columbia has already suffered a serious set-back this year because of the tight money situation. In fairness I should say that their problems are not just the result of the tight money situation in Canada but also in the United States; but they are certainly contributed to by the tight money policies of the present government.

Because of these set-backs, Mr. Speaker, according to yesterday's *Province* a spokesman for McMillan Bloedel Limited said 500 employees at Alberni Pacific sawmill division in Port Alberni and 1,235 workers at the Vancouver plywood division have been told production will halt today and that they will be laid off. B.C. Forest Products Limited last

[Mr. Patterson.]

Wednesday ordered partial closure of its pulp mill at Crofton. The situation is getting more serious by the day. Certainly I did not detect in the minister's statement any recognition of the urgency of the situation or of immediate action. According to yesterday's *Province*, 1,600 of the dock workers met on Wednesday night, but it seems that both sides were adamant in their positions.

As the minister indicated, there is apparently no instrument or mechanism within the existing legislation whereby he can intervene. If I may quote further from yesterday's *Province*, only one ship out of 50 was worked in the port of Vancouver on Wednesday, and that was a potash ship at one of the bulk loading wharves. So that is the situation that obtains today.

What will be the situation, Mr. Speaker, say three days from now or seven days from now or ten days from now? If the minister can assure us that there is a clear indication that the situation might be resolved by Monday, then it might not get out of hand. But there is no indication that it will be solved in the very near future.

The minister has said this is an extraordinary situation. Therefore, I think he should recognize that it requires extraordinary action. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) has made a suggestion in this regard. Parliament has acted to the extent that it can act, and I commend the Prime Minister for agreeing to this debate today. But there is nothing parliament can do now beyond this point, except at the initiative of the government.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly up to the minister and to the government to take initiative action, and this has been requested by the B.C. division of the Canadian Manufacturers Association. If I may quote yesterday's *Province*, the chairman of the B.C. division of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association said:

Surely the government can still intervene in a situation which threatens loss of employment to thousands of B.C. workers and, if allowed to continue during the protracted course of a lawsuit, will have disastrous effects on the economy of B.C. and Canada as a whole.

● (1:20 p.m.)

I urge the minister seriously to consider the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition. As far as this party is concerned, and judging by the statements made on all sides of the house, parliament would be prepared to act today were the minister ready to submit