

Inquiries of the Ministry

of External Affairs by substituting the designation "department of foreign affairs" for that of "external affairs".

[Text]

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

LABOUR RELATIONS**HAL BANKS—INQUIRIES CONCERNING REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I direct a couple of questions to the Minister of Labour and ask whether he would take the house into his confidence and remove the veil of mystery regarding the suddenness with which Hal Banks was removed from office, having regard to the report dated March 10 in which the trustees stated that his removal was to be dealt with by "persons and processes within the trade union movement itself".

Having waited 22 weeks, what happened during a period of eight days that brought about such a complete change in the attitude of the board of trustees? Was it because wire-tapping was brought home to Hal Banks and those connected with him? Was it because of a shortage in the accounts of the union welfare fund? These are questions to which Canadians would like answers. Why would the parliament of Canada secure certain information in a report one day—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: —and the next day witness a sudden turnabout on the part of the trustees?

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have not addressed to the board of trustees any of these specific questions that have been raised by the right hon. gentleman, but it is my impression that the decision of the trustees to take this course of action was a result of long consideration—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Twenty two weeks.

Mr. MacEachen: —of the affairs of the seafarers international union and was not based on any particular incident of recent date. As was pointed out by the trustees in their report, they foresaw the removal of Mr. Banks in the absence of union action to remove him or if, in their judgment, his continued presence as the head of the union, or any person as an officer of the union, was prejudicial to the union itself or the welfare of Canada as a whole. I would think that the action taken yesterday by the trustees was fully consistent with the statement of policy contained in their report tabled in the house the previous day.

[Mr. Marcoux.]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that consistency is not very apparent, but I am not here to make an argument. I ask the minister also whether Mr. Hall, the head of the union from New York, is in Montreal today along with members of his executive, and are they meeting with the board of trustees?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, on this point I will tell the Leader of the Opposition that I received a wire at 1.20 this afternoon from Mr. Paul Hall, president of the seafarers international union of North America, from 95 Lakeshore, Pointe Claire, Montreal, province of Quebec, being a copy of the telegram which he addressed to the trustees protesting their action and asking the trustees to meet with him this afternoon at the headquarters of the S.I.U. I got this telegram just before I came into the house and have had no opportunity to find out from the trustees whether any meeting with Mr. Hall is contemplated or whether any discussions have been arranged.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the hon. gentleman read the complaint portion of the telegram?

Mr. MacEachen: With the leave of the house, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to read this telegram, which is addressed to the Minister of Labour:

The following wire sent today to the board of trustees of the maritime transportation unions: the undersigned president of the seafarers international union of North America—A.F.L.-C.I.O. protests:

1. Arbitrary action in removing Hal C. Banks from the presidency of the seafarers international union of Canada depriving him of the right to a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice for the determination of his rights and obligations.

2. Unilateral appointment as president of our Canadian affiliate an employee of the government trustees who is not nor has ever been a member of any affiliated organization of the S.I.U.N.A.-A.F.L.-C.I.O.

3. Confiscation of hundreds of thousands of dollars of property and assets of this international union.

4. Ejection of international union officer from the premises of the international union.

5. Unnecessary utilization of police force in occupying international union premises including harassment and surveillance of staff by police forces.

6. Precipitous action notwithstanding pending court action questioning the constitutionality of the maritime transportation unions trustee act.

Please be advised that the undersigned as international president of the seafarers international union of North America A.F.L.-C.I.O. shall present himself at the premises of the international union, 634 St. James st. west, Montreal, P.Q.—

—an odd address—

—on Thursday March 19, 1964 at 2 p.m. and suggest that such time and place would be ap-