

Labour Dispute at Montreal

Drury) was here, and he represents a Montreal riding. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau) was also here as well as my parliamentary secretary who is from Verdun, the hon. member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel), the hon. member for Nôtre-Dame-de-Grâce, and the Registrar General (Mr. Turner). Also my colleague the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) was here. I have named about eight or nine members from Montreal who have been showing great interest in this debate, so I would suggest that instead of making careless statements of this kind some hon. members should be a little more reasonable and restrained in what they have to say about fellow members of the house.

I did indicate that after I had attempted to make it clear—whether or not I have succeeded remains to be seen—that the minister was not indifferent to the situation but on the contrary had been actively engaged in trying to find a solution in a reasonable and orderly way, not in a way which would encourage people to run to parliament every time they have a work stoppage, I would attempt to answer any questions hon. members wish to put, and I shall now be glad to do so.

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not think any member could deny the seriousness of the problem that is involved here. Certainly the problem is serious from the point of view of the primary producers of the country, and this has already been pointed out.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that many members have spoken to me privately about the problem faced by the farmers in the country as a result of the tie-up at Montreal. The hon. members for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. Basford), Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne), Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman), Coast-Capilano (Mr. Davis) and Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Groos) have been bringing this very serious problem to the attention not only of myself but the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Laing). I can assure them the matter has had our immediate attention, and today's debate has served to emphasize the importance and gravity of the situation to our primary producers.

I am sure all members are anxious to assess the situation and that no one seeks to use this very grievous state of affairs for political advantage. I am sure we are all anxious to get at the facts of the matter and

[Mr. Nicholson.]

not engage in exaggeration or in putting the problem in a context that is not in accordance with the facts.

From the tenor of the debate in the house and from the representations I have received, there appear to be two areas in which the problem has serious consequences for the primary producers. I note that hon. members opposite feel that more should or could have been done by the Minister of Labour, but I think his presentation to the house this afternoon has clearly indicated he has done everything that is reasonably practicable or which in any way could be effective in this situation.

• (3:30 p.m.)

I was somewhat taken by the words of the hon. member for Moose Mountain (Mr. Southam) who indicated that if the methods of the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) when he was minister of labour were adopted, we would have a panacea that would bring a solution to all our problems. Of course, such advice ought to be considered but we must also remember that labour problems of any kind, particularly critical labour problems similar to the one we are discussing, are much easier to solve when there are long lines of unemployed and there is much unemployment. Then there is not that critical sense of urgency in labour problems that we now see in this country. Labour problems such as the one here are problems of a hot economy and of full employment.

Mr. Ricard: Not in Montreal, by any means.

Mr. Greene: I am sure that in the days when the hon. member for Ontario was the minister labour problems were much easier to solve by reason of the vast number of unemployed who were available to ease the pressure of labour problems.

I wish to touch on two areas of concern. First, I wish to deal with the question of wheat, which was drawn to my attention previously by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and by some speakers today. The situation with regard to wheat is as follows. The hon. member for Moose Mountain said that wheat sales this year were not as great as they had been up to this time last year.

An hon. Member: Moose Jaw-Lake Centre.

Mr. Greene: I beg your pardon. The hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre said that sales this year were not as great as up to this time last year, which undoubtedly has