

the house has had no information. Is the minister now in a position to advise the house that the reaction of the North Vietnamese government to peace feelers is one of frigid contempt; and is he not in a position to advise whether the views of the President of the United States have been brought to his attention, as expressed at a press conference on Saturday when the President said words to this effect: "I have no information that I can make available that would give any encouragement or credence to believing any disposition on the part of the North Vietnamese to negotiate". As well, as part of the general picture, in the same press conference the President indicated that the United States might be expected to accelerate and intensify its attacks on North Viet Nam.

Has Canada expressed any views in this regard to Washington? What are Canada's views in this regard?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my right hon. friend will realize that he has asked a whole series of questions. Mr. Ronning has only just reached Ottawa. I had a first discussion with him this morning. The Prime Minister and I will have further talks with him today concerning the results of his visit. For the present I am sure it is wise to say nothing further concerning this particular phase of our continuing efforts in relation to the Viet Nam problem.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What about the questions respecting the President's indication that the United States will now accelerate its air, naval and land attacks in North Viet Nam? Has the Canadian government been in communication with the United States and expressed its view in respect to this new turn of events?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The Canadian government has been in touch with the United States government.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is about as far as you will get.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

REFUSAL OF B.C. LONGSHOREMEN TO WORK ON VICTORIA DAY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I have a question for the Minister of Labour of which I have given him notice, I hope in time. On Friday my leader, the hon. member for

Inquiries of the Ministry

Burnaby-Coquitlam, asked the minister some questions with regard to ten longshoremen in Vancouver who had been brought to court on charges of violating an injunction order. At that time the minister said he would look into certain questions relating to this situation.

I should like to ask him now, in view of the fact that ten officers of the international Longshoremen's Association in Vancouver have been sentenced to fines of \$500 and \$400 or the alternative of three months in jail, whether the hon. gentleman is prepared to propose the necessary amendment either to the legislation or to the regulations so as to avoid the danger of court action against workers who fall within federal jurisdiction and who take advantage of the statutory holidays provided in the Canada labour code.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I thank the hon. member for having advised me of this question. I confess that it might be still better if I took it as notice, since as yet I do not have the reasons for the judgment of Mr. Justice Verchère who dealt with the matter. I find the forecast in this matter that I gave on Friday last was not too far out when I said the question involved was not so much one of interpretation but whether or not an order of the court had been disobeyed. I find, at least based on information I have received over the week end, that this was the case.

I might add that the union leaders appeared in court and made statements in which they said that injunctions are frustrating—this was part of a long statement—and that in order to protect themselves in this field they must reluctantly engage in civil disobedience. That, I say, seems to be a matter for the courts, because the law is still the law and must be respected. However, until I have seen the reasons for judgment of Mr. Justice Verchère and have had a chance to study them in conjunction with the debates which took place in this house and in the other place last year, when the labour code was being discussed, I do not want to give a definite answer to the hon. member's question.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the fact that the original restraining order could only have been obtained on the basis of an interpretation of the existing law—this is how the whole case arose; this is why the longshoremen were in court last Friday—would the minister consider amending the law in such a way that restraining orders of this kind would become impossible in similar cases?