

*Labour Dispute at Montreal*

and insist upon their being called together and kept together until they have arrived at agreement, so that in the national interest the full measure and pace of the transportation of goods through the port of Montreal can be resumed.

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, I wish very briefly to support this motion of urgency. I support the remarks made by the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke and the hon. member for Kamloops as to the effect this situation is having on the fruit growers of British Columbia and on certain other primary producers. The ones who suffer immediately and to the greater extent are the fruit growers themselves, because they are not in a position to adjust to certain circumstances as are other large scale primary producers, particularly in industry.

Telegrams I have received indicate that this is a matter of increasing and growing concern to many of the people we have the honour to represent. In this connection I should like to place on record the text of a telegram I received, as did the other hon. members who have spoken. The telegram reads as follows:

Deteriorating slowdown St. Lawrence ports and 25 per cent surcharge imposed by steamship companies on ocean freight rates threatens losses our growers disruption shipping schedules and serious additional financial burden United Kingdom importers already hard pressed by sterling devaluation.

Please confer ministers agriculture and labour for appropriate action as complete tie up St. Lawrence ports could result cancellation our firm orders and serious losses Canadian exporters. Eric W. Moore, general manager, B.C. Tree Fruits Ltd.

• (12:10 p.m.)

Since I have received that telegram they have become more concerned than ever. I have discussed this matter with the Minister of Labour and his officials, and with the Minister of Agriculture. Because of the more serious impact upon the agricultural producers, particularly at this time of the year, and the possibility of losing Christmas and winter markets which have been established throughout the years in Great Britain, I do urge that the ministers take action to bring these parties together and resolve this dispute in the national interest.

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words on this subject because, as has been expressed previously by the hon. member for Saint John-Albert, we do have some fears in Halifax and

[Mr. Fulton.]

Saint John about the course that is being followed here. I am afraid a rather big chicken has come home to roost on the shoulders of the government. We all recall that last June the house passed Bill C-215, which settled the dispute between the longshoremen and the shipping federation of Montreal. One of the provisions of the bill—and I suggest it is the one that is causing the difficulty, and indeed the crisis, on the Montreal waterfront and on other waterfronts on the St. Lawrence river—required the commissioner to report on certain problems. At that time the hon. member for Ontario pointed out that this was a rather grave departure from the established labour practice in that this was the imposition of a formula on the parties concerned rather than something that could be studied by both sides and on which agreement could be attained through the normal processes of collective bargaining.

My concern is that the Picard report obviously not only covers the situation in Montreal but will also affect other ports in Canada, including the one I have the honour to represent in parliament. We know only too well that our longshore operations have dwindled over the years, and that we are in a serious position with regard to these operations. I would not like to see them further affected or worsened by what we are going through as a nation in the port of Montreal.

I should like to say to the minister, with all due respect to his position and the statement he made yesterday, that he should now admit to the house that he is wrong and express a willingness to use the vast prestige of his office to get both sides together with him, instead of meeting with one or the other or having his officials meet with one or the other. I believe he should go over the situation to see whether it cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both sides.

The hon. member for Kamloops has suggested a ministerial team which should work on this problem. I do not believe he mentioned the Minister of Transport as a possible member of that team, yet transportation problems in large measure are at the heart of the difficulty, as well as the more immediate labour dispute with which we are seized.

Again I say that I hope the minister will be inclined to change his mind so that instead of having a bloody battle between employers and employees, over an issue in Montreal, any differences on the Picard report will be worked out; because sooner or later they are bound to affect every other port in Canada.