

Inquiries of the Ministry

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I believe the hon. member for Hamilton West has a supplementary.

ESTABLISHMENT OF BUILDING SOCIETIES

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing, since his return from his European fact-finding tour, is now convinced of the usefulness and practicality of building societies, and in light of the fact that interest rates have increased to 10.3 per cent for home ownership, would the minister confer with his colleagues in order to review and re-assess the government's decision regarding building societies?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to stop the formation of building societies in Canada.

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Can he tell the House when his mental age will catch up with his chronological age?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

LABOUR RELATIONS

SETTLEMENT OF WEST COAST TOWBOAT STRIKE—WAGE INCREASE AND SIX PER CENT GUIDELINE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Labour a question regarding the towboat strike which has been going on for some weeks in the province of British Columbia. I understand that an agreement has been worked out for submission to the membership of the Canadian Merchant Service Guild with the help of the conciliation officers of the federal Department of Labour. Can the minister tell the House what are the terms of the settlement which is being submitted to the towboat workers, both with respect to the wage settlement and the manning and safety provisions?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am rather pleased to announce that the very disruptive towboat strike on the west coast was settled about five o'clock this morning, Vancouver time. I think that the hon. gentleman will appreciate the fact that I [Mr. Baldwin.]

cannot be specific as to the details of the settlement because these things are normally put before the membership when they are asked to ratify the proposed settlement, something which will occur on Friday.

I would like to say to the House that the main issue in dispute for some considerable time has been the safety factor, as pointed out by the hon. gentleman. This has been settled as the result of the improved manning regulation which the Minister of Transport tabled today, plus certain conditions which are included in the collective agreement.

So far as the wage factor is concerned, it is a three-year contract. It has been settled precisely on the lines recommended unanimously by the conciliation board. I think the settlements are 10 per cent, 10 per cent and 6 per cent.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the wage settlement which has been agreed upon by both parties and which is now being submitted to the membership, may I ask the Minister if this means that the Department of Labour has come to recognize that the 6 per cent wage guideline restraint is unrealistic unless it is accompanied by restraints on other forms of income?

Mr. Mackasey: Well, Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Labour I recognize the fact that there is a cost-push type of inflation, and I do not think anyone in the government should have ever left the impression, in fact I do not think anyone has left the impression, that the only cause of the cost-push inflation has been wages. I think that profits, dividends, rents, executive salaries, professional fees and wages have all contributed to the cost-push inflation, and I am hoping that labour will not be isolated as the only cause because this would be erroneous and unfair.

SETTLEMENT OF WEST COAST TOWBOAT STRIKE—USE OF SAME CONCILIATION OFFICERS IN POSTAL DISPUTE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the excellent work which the conciliation officers of the federal Department of Labour did in the west coast towboat dispute, may I ask the minister if he would be prepared to make these conciliation officers available to the government in the postal dispute in the hope of bringing about an early settlement?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, much as it is tempting for the