

Inquiries of the Ministry

was not properly quoted in the context of what he said. The minister may want to explain to the House that he did not say it in those terms.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am ready to allow the minister to accept the invitation of the Prime Minister. Will the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell the House what he did say? In view of the confusing statements made by ministers in recent days, could we have this statement clarified?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to allow the minister to make a statement on a statement that was made outside the House, except on a point of order or alleged question of privilege. It has been a long-standing practice in the House that questions can only be directed to the Prime Minister on whether a statement made outside the House represents government policy. I suggest this rule should be enforced even today.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Can the minister tell the House whether the government is making a study of mandatory price and wage controls, and does he expect an announcement to be made in the course of the next few days?

Mr. Speaker: The question can be asked of the minister only to the extent that it is within his own administrative responsibility. I agree this can be embarrassing, but I do not think the question can be asked in those terms.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The confusion is only normal. Now that the President of the Treasury Board has indicated that the guideline on the postal negotiations in terms of salaries is 6 per cent, is this guideline also going to be applied to other collective bargaining negotiations in which the government of Canada may be involved in the course of the next few months?

Mr. Drury: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question to the President of the Treasury Board is supplementary to an earlier question. In view of the urgent public appeal made by the Postmaster General for an early settlement of the postal dispute, will the government make a reasonable offer to the postal employees, one that might be counted on to bring about an early settlement?

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Mr. Drury: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We shall be reiterating what I think is a very reasonable offer again this afternoon.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Will the minister make not just the same old offer but a reasonable one?

Mr. Drury: We have, Mr. Speaker.

[Later:]

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): My supplementary question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Now that the government has established wage guidelines applicable to the postal employees, does the President of the Treasury Board, in the hope that a settlement of the postal dispute will be reached, intend to impose any communications guidelines on the Minister of Communications, or will that minister continue to make spontaneous speeches and discourses on the negotiations?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

INFLATION—SIX PER CENT WAGE INCREASE
GUIDELINE—INCREASE IN DIVIDEND
PAYMENTS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): May I address a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance who has just assured the House that the 6 per cent limitation on wage increases for civil servants is now applicable. Is the government taking cognizance of the fact that figures just issued show an increase in the dividends of banks and financial institutions amounting to some 30 per cent for the first six months of this year, 14 per cent by mines and 8½ per cent generally for all dividend payments? Is the minister taking similar action with respect to this large increase in dividends inasmuch as he is imposing a 6 per cent limitation on civil servants?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): The figures published recently also show that profits were down by 3.8 per cent in the first quarter. With regard to the figures of banks and other commercial institutions which have made an agreement with respect to guidelines, I would expect that Dr. Young would see that they are living up to their undertakings in that regard.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In light of the statement the minister made yesterday, as reported at page 7839, to the effect that the banks have made an agreement with respect to restricting their