

Mr. SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that when a question is put to a minister, it should not give information to the house but rather should seek to obtain information from the minister.

Mr. ISNOR: My question can be put in three words: Is this correct?

Mr. R. W. MAYHEW (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has received some reports of misunderstanding about this matter, and he anticipated this question. We are grateful to the hon. member for Halifax for sending it to us ahead of time. I should like to read a statement on behalf of the minister who at the present time is out of the city.

As a result of the publications during the past week of the lists of those civil servants who received war duties supplements, and of incomplete expositions in the press of their nature and purpose, including, I may add, a tendency to use the short and convenient word "bonus" in describing them, many people have jumped to the conclusion that the government itself, as employer, has not observed the principles it laid down in the wartime wages control order and the wartime salaries order. Such a conclusion is wrong and is based on misunderstanding.

War duties supplements have been paid to civil servants instead of higher wages or salaries that would result from permanent promotions or reclassifications, and they are similar to the increased wage or salary rates which private business has been permitted to pay to employees who have been promoted or reclassified as a result of added responsibilities and increased duties.

Early in the war the government adopted the policy of making no permanent promotions or reclassifications except to fill vacancies due to death or retirement, or in quite exceptional circumstances, because it was felt that the abnormal conditions of war did not make possible a proper appraisal of permanent positions, and also because it was felt that civil servants could reasonably be expected to shoulder some additional duties without extra pay. Later, after the wage control and salaries orders had been introduced and it was evident that the war would last some years longer, it was realized that civil servants who were doing substantially more difficult and important work than that appropriate to their salaries should get some increase in pay even though they were not permanently promoted or reclassified. War duties supplements were introduced to meet this need, and under regulations particularly designed to ensure that they would be

granted only in circumstances which would entitle increases to be paid to private employees under the wage or salary orders.

More specifically it has been the policy, and required under our regulations, that war duties supplements be awarded only to those civil servants who have been given "added duties and increased responsibilities," and in amounts warranted by these. They have been comparable with increased salaries for promotions permitted under paragraph 3 of the salaries order or with increases in war industry permitted under paragraph 5 (a) (iii) of that order. They are comparable with the increases permitted under the wages order, without application to war labour boards, which result from the promotion or reclassification of employees from one job classification to another.

Indeed, the need to follow closely the principles applied to private business under our stabilization policy has brought us under criticism from civil servants who accuse us of discrimination in not granting these supplements more widely. Naturally, many persons who have done more work, or worked longer hours, or whose work has been of real importance in the war, feel that their efforts and importance should be recognized in higher pay. But we could not follow a general practice of that kind without endangering our stabilization programme if the same principles were permitted to apply in private business. Consequently we have had to restrict the payment of supplements to those who have in fact been given additional duties and increased responsibilities, not simply a greater amount of work, and who would therefore, under normal circumstances, have merited promotion, or, in the technical parlance of the civil service, reclassification.

BRITISH IMPORT LICENCES

STATEMENT OF PREMIER ATTLEE—SHIPMENTS OF CANADIAN GOODS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. K. FRASER (Peterborough West): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Trade and Commerce intend to make a statement in regard to the question I asked yesterday?

Hon. J. A. MacKINNON (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I wish to advise the house that at the very earliest opportunity I intend to make a statement on the question raised by the hon. member for Peterborough West, which is attracting a great deal of attention not only in the house but throughout Canada generally. More completely to inform the house upon the situation, certain communications are being carried on, and just as soon