

Inquiries of the Ministry

come mat now outside the Privy Council Office for the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer)?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing for taking the advice of the opposition which has long been seeking the co-operation in this field of the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Now that we are moving in that direction, may I ask whether the Prime Minister would consider setting up a standing committee on urban affairs to which many representations could be directed?

Mr. Baldwin: Come on! Answer the question!

Mr. McCleave: Does the Prime Minister now know what is going on?

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I know the Prime Minister was exceptionally busy when I asked my question. Perhaps I might ask my question again. In view of the direction that government policy has now taken, is the Prime Minister prepared to recommend the setting up of a standing committee on urban affairs?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his representation.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Prime Minister assure the House that the independence and initiative the Minister without Portfolio displays in urban affairs will meet with more success than the independence and initiative he displayed when he was in charge of Indian affairs?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

REFUSAL OF CASH BENEFITS BY BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTER

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Is the minister aware of Mr. Gaglardi's new directive in British Columbia that people involved in a labour dispute can receive food vouchers but no cash welfare, and only when

[Mr. Baldwin.]

they can prove there is no food in the house? If he is aware of this, did he agree to it? If not, what action does he propose to take?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of various press releases alleging that the minister made this statement, but I have not yet seen such a statement in the form of directives to welfare administrators who are responsible. If it should occur that there are such directives, that of course would be contrary to the provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan and the agreements under it.

Mrs. MacInnis: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If I can provide the minister with those written directives, will he take action?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

INDUSTRY

GOLD MINING—ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING FREEING OF DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Finance a question in which I said:

After the adoption of the floating exchange rate for the Canadian dollar, Canadian gold mines are losing revenues and a good many marginal mines which attract American funds to Canada and which provide employment for Canadians will undoubtedly have to close down.

The Minister of Finance told me that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was meeting with gold producers to discuss this particular problem. Is the latter in a position today to tell the House whether the government will continue or will increase the subsidies paid to gold mines to keep them in operation, in order to reassure the population of northwestern Quebec?

[English]

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, there is as yet no government decision on the question of the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act. The subsidies continue until the end of the year. I have had meetings both with community leaders from northern Ontario and northwestern Quebec and also, yesterday, with officials of the Canadian Mining Association. My own department is conducting a