

*Inquiries of the Ministry***LABOUR RELATIONS****REQUEST FOR TABLING OF ORDER EXTENDING MARITIME UNIONS TRUSTEESHIP**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Is he tabling today, or if not today when will he table, the order in council extending the application of the Maritime Transportation Unions Trustees Act, and also the annual report of the board of trustees.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult for me to table the annual report because it has not come into my hands. With regard to the proclamation, pursuant to the statute I must table the proclamation within a limited number of days, and I can assure the hon. member and the house that it will be tabled within the next few days.

Mr. Howard: A supplementary question. I wonder whether the minister would take the opportunity on motions to explain to the house the reasons for passing that order in council?

Mr. Nicholson: I would be very pleased to, Mr. Speaker.

BRIDGES**BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Finance whether there have recently been, or are now, negotiations with the government of British Columbia regarding federal assistance with respect to the cost of the bridge across the first narrows in Vancouver? If so what is the present position?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the premier of British Columbia has made representations on this subject; I do not know that they can be termed negotiations.

Mr. Fulton: A supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to confirm a report in a Vancouver paper that the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister made a statement, or gave information to the mayor of Vancouver, that the federal government would be willing to advance part of the cost of this bridge on a repayment basis, which might be handled by the imposition of tolls.

[Mr. Greene.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. gentleman realizes that he cannot ask a question about the accuracy or otherwise of a press statement.

Mr. Fulton: I was asking the finance minister whether he was in a position to confirm that that is the position of the federal government?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm the statement in those terms.

HOUSING**INQUIRY AS TO INTRODUCTION OF FURTHER LEGISLATION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Heward Graffey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, during the recess many of us in this house became more aware of the critical housing shortage which is facing Canadians, especially those in the lower income brackets.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should ask a question. Questions cannot be prefaced by statements.

Mr. Graffey: In view of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures published Wednesday showing a rise in the cost of living due to increased housing costs and rents, may I ask the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, whether the government is seriously considering housing legislation which will regard housing policy as a social welfare necessity and not a fiscal instrument.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, that is rather a general question or statement involving several questions of policy. The government is aware of the seriousness of the housing situation, and when the government decides to make any change in its policy same will be announced to the house.

Mr. Graffey: In view of the fact that the crisis is here now, and many Canadians in the low income groups want housing now—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is now submitting an argument. He should ask a question.

Mr. Graffey: May I ask a supplementary question. Will this announcement be made very, very soon so that this situation can be relieved very, very soon?

Mr. J. R. Keays (Gaspé): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. On December 7 I addressed a question to the Minister of Labour