

Inquiries of the Ministry

reconsidering their policy and are considering other approaches to the problem of fighting inflation?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, rather than base our policies on news reports, I discussed this matter with the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission yesterday who, following the meeting of finance ministers in Winnipeg the previous week, is still awaiting reactions from a number of provinces as to their support for the guideline policy, which we hope will be forthcoming, and at that time we will have a further statement to make.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, from the minister's answer I gather that information which I think was given on the floor of the House to the effect, that the provincial finance ministers had agreed to the 6 per cent guideline was wrong, and that information is still expected from the various provinces. Will the minister undertake to make a statement to the House when the information is received?

Mr. Basford: Well, Mr. Speaker, at the finance ministers' meeting, as the communiqué indicates, there was a very wide measure of support expressed by the provincial ministers for the policy. But a number of them, quite properly, had to report to their Prime Ministers and their cabinets, and we are still awaiting reactions from some of the provinces.

[Later:]

INFLATION—SIX PER CENT WAGE INCREASE
GUIDELINE—PROPOSED COMPULSORY
LABOUR COURTS

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether he or any other member of the government has been in communication with the government of Saskatchewan about that province's proposal for compulsory labour courts to enforce the 6 per cent guideline?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I have not, but whether there has been communication with the Prices and Incomes Commission or with the Department of Finance I do not know. I will inquire.

[Mr. Lewis.]

DRUGS

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON STEPS TO CONTROL PRICES

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the urgency of the problem, particularly with reference to the continuing high cost of drugs for old age pensioners, would the minister make a statement on motions before Parliament adjourns for the summer outlining the steps he is taking to deal with this problem?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I made a speech last Wednesday, and I am disappointed the hon. member has not read it, in which I indicated what we are doing.

Mr. Dinsdale: A supplementary question. Before the summer recess would the minister report to the House on the results of his meeting with the provincial ministers?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the official opposition critic on consumer affairs does not realize the meeting was with provincial officials.

CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

REFUSAL OF CASH BENEFITS BY BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTER

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. As I now have evidence that British Columbia's welfare minister Gaglardi has issued a directive to welfare officers to issue food vouchers only, for a two week period, to those involved in labour disputes, and as the federal minister has declared this action to be contrary to the provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan, will he now take action to enforce the law and assure that those entitled to its benefits will receive them?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the recipients of notices of the nature that the hon. member has just described are in the process of being interviewed. If what the hon. member says turns out to be the case, I will have to take up the matter again with the provincial minister of welfare to ascertain whether he has breached the provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan, and thereby not enti-