

Inquiries of the Ministry

choose the most appropriate day for such a debate. The time and day on which we have such a debate must be the most conducive to the submission of constructive suggestions on the part of hon. members in respect of the matter on which the debate would be held.

In the circumstances as they exist today, taking into account all the conditions and taking into account the requirements of the Standing Order and precedents, I would not think that this would be the ideal time to put to the House the motion proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the opposite of what I said. I said that the government, having accepted these guidelines, will have to take cognizance of them in dealing with its own employees.

An hon. Member: And what does that mean?

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask the President of the Treasury Board whether this does not mean that in fact there is no collective bargaining, nor room for collective bargaining? Also, does the government intend to proceed directly and impose a limit, in accordance with these guidelines, upon the Post Office employees who are negotiating? In other words, does the government intend to end the pretence that there is actually collective bargaining going on?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it is not a pretence that there is collective bargaining. There is bargaining going on at this very moment, or there will be very shortly, in respect of a number of issues as well as the one of the so-called pay package. I think the government recognizes and I am sure the Council of Postal Unions will recognize that there is greater freedom to bargain in certain areas than in others. In the matter of the pay package there is very little freedom.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I ask the Prime Minister to clarify the statement he made a moment ago in view of the fact that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, according to this morning's *Montreal Gazette*, made two statements. First, he said that an announcement will be forthcoming in a few days. Second, when asked whether the government was preparing price and wage controls the minister said:

I believe this is what they are working on in Ottawa at the moment.

The Prime Minister said that the minister was not correctly quoted. Are both statements incorrect? I ask the Prime Minister specifically whether the government is working on mandatory wage and price controls, and will an announcement be made in the course of a few days, as suggested by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce?

Mr. Trudeau: I believe I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition that it was not government policy and that we were not working on mandatory wage and price controls. I indicated that communications which my office had with the minister disclosed that he

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****INFLATION—IMPOSITION OF WAGE AND/OR PRICE CONTROLS—APPLICATION OF SIX PER CENT WAGE INCREASE GUIDELINE TO POSTAL EMPLOYEES**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government is actively considering the imposition of wage and/or price controls at the present time? I direct this question to the Prime Minister because the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is reported to have said in Montreal yesterday that this matter is actually being studied and that an announcement is to be expected within a few days.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my office has been in communication with the minister, who I see is in the House now, but this is not government policy, nor did the minister announce it in the terms which are quoted by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask the Minister of Finance, who I suppose is the expert on the existing guideline policy of the government, whether the guideline policy of the federal government limiting wage increases to 6 per cent applies to the wages and salaries of the Post Office employees which are now under negotiation?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the government, having accepted these guidelines, will have to take cognizance of them in its settlements with its own employees.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, am I to understand that there is no guideline policy in effect?