

*Oral Questions*

have them looked into, especially if they involve questions under the Combines Investigation Act.

**Mr. Grier:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister arising from the increases in the retail price of beef which have taken place this week and still further increases which are anticipated. May I ask the minister what steps he is planning to prevent these increases since the prices being paid to beef producers clearly cannot justify them?

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, government policy is that it will be prepared to take appropriate action if there are reports from the Food Prices Review Board indicating that prices are unwarranted and in response to which the parties will not make changes voluntarily. I followed up on a suggestion of the hon. member for St. John's East and was in touch with the chairman of the Food Prices Review Board who confirmed to me that this subject is on the agenda for their meeting tomorrow. As I said yesterday, it could well be that there could be, as suggested by the hon. member, an interim report as a result of that meeting.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I—

**Mr. Speaker:** I apologize to the hon. member for Témiscamingue, but an hon. member is rising on a question of privilege.

[English]

**Mr. Grier:** Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is this: on Monday I asked the minister whether he would investigate the matter to which I have just referred. He replied, as recorded on page 1626 of *Hansard*, that he hoped he would be able to give the House a report as soon as possible and certainly within a day or two. This is the second of the two days to which the minister referred. My point of privilege is that he has given an undertaking to the House which he has not lived up to.

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I think my exact words, and I stand to be corrected, were "a day or so". In any event, I have not yet received a report containing the kind of information sought by the hon. member, by myself and by other members of the House. In view of the importance of the situation, I think he would expect as complete and as full a report as possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure we could have saved a few minutes if we had not gone into that question of privilege.

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[Translation]

**LABOUR RELATIONS****SUGGESTED ACTION BY GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT STRIKES AFFECTING ECONOMY**

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

In view of the wave of strikes which is sweeping over this country, does the government intend to put an end to

[Mr. Gray.]

this throwing work out of gear, and by throwing it back into gear again, favour the development and progress of the Canadian economy?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian economy is doing just fine, thank you. The development of Canada can favourably compare with that of any OECD country. As far as strikes are concerned, the hon. member is aware of the law. I do not know whether or not he has any precise suggestion to make on behalf of his party. In case he has, let him put them forward and we shall have a look at them. I have just indicated, in reply to another question, that Mr. Finkelman's report was under review.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I see to my left and to my right a large number of members seeking to ask questions. I think members might realize that many will be disappointed this afternoon. We have spent quite a bit of time on the first two or three questions and it will be difficult to have many questioners before the termination of the 40 minutes. For the moment the Chair recognizes the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a supplementary to the Prime Minister.

He asked me whether we had solutions to suggest. We certainly have. In this connection, can the Prime Minister tell us if the government is considering establishing a labour court and compulsory arbitration in labour disputes in public sectors, such as postal services, transportation, social affairs and health?

**Mr. Trudeau:** The hon. member seems to think that the right to strike should be removed from these sectors, Mr. Speaker. Unless I am mistaken, this is what he suggests since he talks about compulsory arbitration, thus assuming there is no right to strike. If so, the answer is no.

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[English]

**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****AVERAGE RATE OF INCREASE IN EARNINGS AND INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING**

**Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Given the fact that the underlying cause for so much of the industrial unrest in this country today is the runaway rate of inflation, can the minister tell us, particularly because the average rate of increase in earnings is substantially less than the increase in the cost of living, if he intends to do anything at all before the budget comes in about this serious problem?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the hon. gentleman's premise. He will have to wait for a complete answer until the budget debate.