

Inquiries of the Ministry

that fully 60 per cent of surveyed businesses expect higher prices in 1970, can the minister say whether the government proposes to take any additional measures to offset this kind of development, rather than simply leaving the whole problem to the Prices and Incomes Commission?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the matter of inflation in this country is under continual review by the government and any measures we propose to take will be announced to the House in the proper manner.

Mr. Stanfield: In light of this very general response, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Finance whether it is still the intention of the government to continue to refuse a parliamentary committee review of the trend-setting price increases made recently and other matters related to inflation? I ask this question particularly in view of the apparent inability of the government to bring forward helpful measures.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if I may reply for the Minister of Finance, I have in the past made it clear to the House that we intend to ask the House to establish a parliamentary committee on price stability, but when the opposition spends six or seven days debating CNR financing it becomes difficult to get a motion like that before the House.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I ask the minister when he proposes to take steps to establish such a committee.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I am ready to establish it right away. It is simply a question of when the House is ready to establish it.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Arising from the remarks he made in Vancouver yesterday, wherein he indicated that the government was developing new inflation control measures for use in the event that voluntary restraints do not work successfully, is the minister now in a position to take the House of Commons into his confidence with respect to the nature of these controls and, if so, will they also be placed on coloured slides?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

PROSPECTIVE INCREASE IN COPPER PRICES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance regarding reports that the copper producers of Canada, who have had three price increases in the past year, are now discussing a fourth increase in price. Is the government taking the precaution of having discussions with the copper-producing companies in order to prevent, if at all possible, a fourth increase in the price of copper within a single year?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the question as notice and look into the matter.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Have the minister or the Prices and Incomes Commission had or are they planning to have discussions with the copper producers to deal with the matter of a possible fourth increase in the price of copper?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to this question should be given by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister a question with respect to his department and the Prices and Incomes Commission, which allegedly comes under his jurisdiction. I asked him if that commission has had discussions or is planning to have discussions with the copper producers of this country. That matter does not come under the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, as I have previously explained to the House, I do not get a daily report from the Prices and Incomes Commission. They are having discussions across the country with various groups who are making private and group wage and price decisions, in an attempt to get an agreed package of voluntary restraint. However, I am not informed whether they have met or have the intention of meeting with spokesmen of the copper industry.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): As a supplementary question I ask the minister whether he will request the