

Inquiries of the Ministry

port. Has the minister's attention been drawn to a recent statement by an official of his department to the effect that the federal government agreement to build a \$16 million wharf to serve the planned refinery at Come-By-Chance, Newfoundland, is contingent on certain additional benefits guaranteeing more revenue for the province of Newfoundland and, if so, what are the additional benefits?

Mr. Speaker: I would think that this question could be placed on the Order Paper. Again, if there is urgency I will not fail to ensure that it receives priority if the hon. member wants to have it considered at the time of adjournment.

Mr. Carter: The question is of very great importance to the province of Newfoundland because this refinery plays a very great part in the future economic prospects of that province and the future sources of employment. I think the minister was prepared to answer the question with your permission, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to withdraw from the position I adopted a moment ago, but perhaps with agreement the minister might be allowed to reply.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would call the hon. member's attention to your own ruling that a minister can only answer within the competence of his own department. I suggest that the question be directed to the Minister of Public Works when he is next in the House.

POST OFFICE

POSSIBLE NATIONAL STRIKE—ADJUSTMENT OF GOVERNMENT OFFER IN ORDER TO SETTLE DISPUTE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of a report that has been made public, since we were asking questions about the postal situation 10 or 15 minutes ago, to the effect that the negotiating team for the postal workers intends to stay in the bargaining room until a settlement is reached, will the government reconsider its position and make the kind of offer that might get this matter settled?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): The government side is also prepared to stay.

[Mr. Carter.]

FINANCE

INCREASED EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Minister of Finance a question relating to the increase in equalization payments to the provinces of approximately \$50 million during the current year which he announced over the weekend and to which he referred in the House yesterday. Does that include equalization payments to the province of Quebec?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it covers all provinces receiving equalization payments. I do not have the breakdown in front of me. I believe my officials are in touch with the various provinces to indicate their calculations at present, and it is hoped that a final figure will be worked out very soon. As my hon. friend knows, statistics are continuously coming in with respect to equalization.

Mr. Stanfield: The Minister of Finance seems to have this matter somewhat on his conscience. Would he make available to us the statistical calculations upon which his figure is based?

Mr. Benson: I will take this up with officials in my department. As my hon. friend knows, having formerly been a premier, it is a very complicated calculation but I will provide him with information as soon as the final figures are calculated.

Mr. Stanfield: Would the minister not agree that when he gives a figure to the House it should be one that he is able to support with existing statistical information?

Mr. Benson: Based on our present estimates the figure is correct and we think it will be in the area I indicated to the provinces. The additional money that is going to the provinces is not on my conscience. I think they really need it.

TAXATION

WHITE PAPER ON REFORM—USE OF CERTAIN FACTORS AS JUSTIFICATION FOR WITHDRAWAL OR REVISION

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance to the one asked earlier by the member for Dauphin about the timetable for implementation of the white paper on tax reform. Regardless of any basic objections to