

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest we must make some headway during the question period. There is limited time. Many hon. members are waiting to ask questions. This is the reason the Chair must exercise some discretion in giving an opportunity to other members to join the fray and ask questions. If there should be sufficient time, I would certainly return to the hon. member to give him an opportunity to ask supplementary questions.

LABOUR RELATIONS**LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PROGRESS TOWARD SETTLEMENT**

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Labour, who I believe is in British Columbia in connection with the longshoremen's strike, may I direct this question to the Prime Minister. Could the Prime Minister indicate whether any progress is being made in the negotiations leading to a settlement of this very important dispute?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I regret that at this time I am not in a position to make any report. The minister is with the parties. As usual he is optimistic, but there is nothing I can add at the moment.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask whether the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour has any information to give us on the further progress of the negotiations.

Mr. Jim McNulty (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): No more than the Prime Minister has stated, Mr. Speaker.

OIL**TASK FORCE ON DEVELOPMENT—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On December 20 last the acting minister of that department announced the creation of a government task force to study oil development. Would the minister take an early opportunity on motions to give us a progress report on the work of that task force?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the task force is an interdepartmental task force of officials. It is not customary to make their reports to government public, but I will

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

certainly consider the hon. member's suggestion. I might point out that during this period of negotiations with our friends in the United States with regard to oil policies a great number of the items under consideration are of a highly confidential nature and it would not be in the public interest to have a continuing public dialogue at this time. Certainly, however, I am fully aware of the hon. member's concern in this area and will consider his suggestion.

FINANCE**INQUIRY AS TO TERMINATION OR CURTAILMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO WELFARE PROGRAMS**

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question which perhaps I should direct to the Prime Minister or to the Minister of Finance. Is the government planning to terminate or greatly curtail its financial contributions to welfare programs of the provinces?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

BROADCASTING**EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION—INQUIRY AS TO DROPPING OF DRAFT BILL**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the application of the CBC for the use of UHF channel 19 in Toronto for ETV broadcasting, will the government be dropping the draft bill of last session to set up a separate ETV service?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): It is my understanding that the Secretary of State intends to make a statement on motions on this subject some time next week. If I am wrong in this assumption, I will have to correct myself.

[Translation]

FINANCE**REQUEST FOR TAX REDUCTION IN LIGHT OF SURPLUS**

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Finance.

Since he declared a surplus exceeding even his estimates, could he tell us whether he intends to reduce taxes accordingly?

Mr. Speaker: Surely the hon. member will admit that the question is so wide in scope as to make it impossible for the minister to answer it at this time.