

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. HOMUTH: Answer in the same way.

Mr. MITCHELL: If I did that, my hon. friend would not understand me.

Mr. HOMUTH: No one in the house can speak as many languages as the Minister of Labour.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member for Chapleau was good enough to give me notice of his question. I wish to thank him for his interest and help in this dispute. As the house no doubt is aware, the strike at Noranda Mines Limited was settled late on Sunday night, following negotiations conducted by the Hon. Mr. Justice O. L. Boulanger who was appointed as industrial disputes inquiry commissioner in this case. The negotiations reached a crucial stage on Sunday. A formula for settlement of the strike was considered by the men's committee and subsequently referred to mass meetings of the membership held later in the day. The points still in dispute were the amount of the wage increase—an alternative to the demand for a check-off which the union had dropped—and the terms under which the men would be taken back to work. After clarification of the latter question the proposals put forward were accepted by the members at their meetings and a memorandum of settlement was signed late on Sunday night by the company and the union.

The terms of settlement provide for a wage increase of 13 cents an hour, 10 cents retroactive to May 16, 1946, and the remainder effective November 1, 1946. Provision has been made for the collection of union dues on premises adjacent to the mine two afternoons a month. It was agreed that the men would be returned to work without discrimination in so far as legitimate union activity during the strike was concerned, and that every effort would be made by the company to have all employees back in the mine within fourteen days of the strike settlement.

I should like at this time to pay high tribute to the patience, good humour and effectiveness of the commissioner, Mr. Justice Boulanger. The dispute was a difficult one to conciliate but with perseverance, good sense and a capacity for mediation on the part of the commissioner and a willingness to compromise by the parties to the dispute the strike was resolved.

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY

INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF CELEBRATION IN CANADA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. N. J. M. LOCKHART (Lincoln): May I inquire of the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether

[Mr. Mitchell.]

there has been any announcement as to the date on which His Majesty's birthday is to be celebrated? I have received a communication and I want to plan something special. Perhaps the appropriate minister will reply.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Is the hon. member referring to the celebration in Canada?

Mr. LOCKHART: The celebration in Canada of His Majesty's birthday.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I know that the matter was up for consideration but I do not believe a final decision has been reached. I will see that the hon. gentleman's question is considered.

POSTAL SERVICE

GIFT PARCELS FOR UNITED STATES OCCUPIED ZONE IN GERMANY

Hon. ERNEST BERTRAND (Postmaster General): Yesterday the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) asked me a question as to the delivery of gift parcels in Germany. I may tell him today that it is possible to send parcels to any zone in Germany. They are accepted, and instructions have been given to the post office to advise people who want to send such parcels. The cost runs from 60 cents for one pound to \$2.25 for eleven pounds.

HOUSE OF COMMONS**AUDIBILITY OF DEBATE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. A. CRUICKSHANK (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to you, and I hope I am loud enough. Last year the member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) brought up a most interesting subject. Just now I have been listening to the best of my ability to a private discussion between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and I have not the faintest idea what either of them has said. According to the press you ruled, sir, after a delightful trip to Mexico or somewhere, that microphones were not needed in this house. The most important part of this house in bringing representations to the people of Canada is the press gallery. We cannot hear a word that is being said from the front benches; how then can the press gallery hear? With all deference to your ruling, sir, I would ask that further consideration be given the question of installing microphones or some other effective device.