

Inquiries of the Ministry

engaging in very important meetings. He will return at the beginning of next week, and I will put this question to him as soon as he returns to his office.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Will the Prime Minister himself not act on this matter?

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister which relates to what he said on these matters at the dinner given for the tripartite conference last night. Have the Departments of Finance and Industry, Trade and Commerce been instructed to prepare tax and tariff measures in order to fight inflation?

Mr. Trudeau: They have not been so instructed, Mr. Speaker, but the government is giving consideration to alternative ways of fighting inflation, as several ministers have stated in past days.

Mr. Hees: I have a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in respect of what the Prime Minister said last night about inflation fighting options which the government has open to it. Will he now or at the first opportunity on motions outline to the House just what are these inflation fighting options?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the textbooks on economics contain various options, four of which I mentioned last night. I do not intend to implement them until the measures in which we still believe have shown themselves to be without result. The question will be answered if we have to resort to further measures.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will request his colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, to make a statement to the House when he returns in order to indicate to the house precisely what action the Prices and Incomes Commission has taken to propose specific restraints, forms of restraints and degrees of restraints to particular sectors of the economy? Would the appropriate minister indicate to the House just what has been done, if anything, in this area?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I will raise the question with him. Let me repeat the answer just given by the Parliamentary Secretary. This is an independent commission and we do not want to be in the position of calling the commission in at every turn to give them instructions or ask them for reports.

[Mr. Langlois.]

As the minister said a few days ago, the opposition supported us and, indeed, urged us on in appointing this commission. We have faith in the men who form the commission. I think it is proper from time to time for contacts to take place between the commission and the minister, but I am sure the opposition would be first to object if we appeared to be directing the operations of the commission on a day to day or, indeed, a week to week basis.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, first of all may I say on a question of privilege that I never pressed the government for the appointment of this independent commission or study group, as I call it from time to time. May I ask the Prime Minister in a non-argumentative way whether he would agree that there is intense public interest and that it is very much in the public interest that we have as much information as possible in this House and throughout the country regarding what proposals or steps are taken by this commission in order that we may formulate our own views as to what is required?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, I would agree with that, Mr. Speaker, but this involves a matter of knowing how soon and how frequently the Leader of the Opposition thinks the commission should be reporting to the minister and to Parliament. We do not think it should be on a weekly basis.

Mr. Hees: I have a further supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

POST OFFICE**GRANTING OF SPECIAL RATES TO NEWSPAPERS IN DESIGNATED AREAS**

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): I should like to direct my question to the Postmaster General and Minister of Communications.

As the postal rates in force since last year resulted in the disappearance of several Canadian papers and since many local weeklies are presently experiencing financial difficulties, could the minister tell us whether it is true that his department is considering granting privileges by means of special rates in the so-called designated areas?

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General and Minister of Communications): No, Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of altering our decision. However, we wish to discuss the problem with a group of owners of weeklies I will be meeting within a few days.