

Inquiries of the Ministry

sumers of the country been invited to sit in on this conference? If no such invitation has been extended to them, why have they been overlooked?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the conference being held today and tomorrow is for the Prices and Incomes Commission to obtain from the businessmen attending the conference a commitment with regard to a program of price restraint for 1970. It is they who must give the commitment and not the consumers.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Inasmuch as our consumers have a very real interest in the outcome of the discussions, will the minister not consider permitting consumer representatives to sit in on the conference so that they express their point of view on the whole question of the rising cost of living?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, officials of my department are at the conference and statutorily they represent consumers.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, will the minister make a statement to the House on motions at the conclusion of the conference?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, the plan is that the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission will make a statement late tomorrow.

[Later:]

TIME OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION AND ORGANIZED LABOUR

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Following the conclusion of the meetings now going on between the Prices and Incomes Commission and representatives of management, when is it the intention of the chairman of that commission to approach again the leaders of organized labour?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House many times, this is an independent commission. After completing this series of meetings, the commission will be looking at other areas in the economy where a greater degree of restraint might obtain.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister attempting to convey the idea to the House that he and the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission do not discuss these matters in imately? Is he trying to pretend that he does not know what the chairman of the commission intends to do later?

Mr. Basford: That is not true, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: Oh, nonsense!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That question is argumentative.

[Later:]

Mr. Hees: I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. A few moments ago when answering a question, because he did not have a communication from the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission the minister was not aware when the commission intended to re-approach organized labour. Would the minister speak to the chairman in the next 24 hours and report to this House the next time he is on duty?

Mr. Basford: I said, Mr. Speaker, that once this round of meetings is over and I am sure the hon. member will agree with me when I say I hope they will be successful, the commission will then be looking at other sectors of the economy where some form of restraint program could be worked out. Obviously, the area that the hon. member refers to is one of those areas.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question. Will the minister take the first opportunity on motions to outline the program of the Prices and Incomes Commission on this very important matter?

PARTICIPATION OF MOVIE INDUSTRY IN MEETING WITH PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION

Mr. W. M. Howe (Wellington-Gray): A supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact recent news items have indicated that the cost of admission tickets to movies has added to the increased cost of living in Canada, is the movie industry participating in this retail price meeting in Ottawa? Has the minister discussed with them the tremendous increase in movie prices up about 70 per cent in the last 15 years?