

Inquiries of the Ministry

asked the minister a straightforward question, which he will not answer, of course, because he never does.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether he would give a perfectly simple straightforward answer to the question I asked and not to the question I did not ask. Will the minister say yes or no as to whether the government, a department of the government or an agency of the government privately persuaded Inco from an earlier settlement of the strike and, alternatively, whether the government or an agency thereof indicated specific guidelines it did not wish exceeded in the case of that strike?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I can only answer on what I have responsibility for and in that light the answer is no.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

STEEL, NICKEL, AUTOMOBILE AND OIL PRICE INCREASES—REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, is the minister prepared to make a statement on whether he will have a public inquiry made into the recent price increases in steel, nickel, automobiles and oil?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it might be helpful for me to say two things. First, it was envisaged in the white paper on price stability that inquiries by the commission would be conducted in private in order that they might be conducted as quickly as possible and that public reports would be made for examination by a committee of this House.

Second, perhaps I might read, in view of the hon. member's question and the previous motion, a telegram from the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission to Mr. Larry Sefton, director of the United Steelworkers of America, in which he says:

As you know the Prices and Incomes Commission has been exploring with unions, business, farm and professional groups and governments the feasibility of reaching agreement on some generally acceptable form of price and income restraints. If a set of commitments of this kind were in place today agreed criteria and review procedures would exist for judging whether or not the recent price and wage increases at the International Nickel Company were justified. As you also know, however, the two major trade union federations—

Some hon. Members: Order!

[*Mr. Hees:*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the minister that if he wants to make a lengthy statement it should be done by asking for the consent of the House to revert to motions.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer does not bear directly on the particular question I asked. Would he agree to have a standing committee of the House conduct an open, public inquiry?

Mr. Basford: Well, Mr. Speaker, it was made clear in the white paper to which I referred that the commission was intending as a general rule to conduct private inquiries, the reports on which would then be referred to a committee of the House for public examination and inquiry. As the chairman of the commission said in his wire, if the two major trade union federations had not rejected the approach of the commission but had agreed, there would now be in place agreed criteria for judging such increases.

LABOUR RELATIONS

VANCOUVER—DISPUTE BETWEEN GRAIN WORKERS UNION AND ELEVATOR OPERATORS

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct this question to the Minister of Labour. Because of what I consider a mutual desire that there be no more waterfront strikes in Vancouver, may I ask the minister whether he has sent a federal conciliator, as requested, to attempt to resolve the difficulties between the grain workers union and the elevator operators? If so, can he report on any progress that is being made?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Last week in Vancouver I met with both the union and management. Contrary to public opinion, both sides seemed to be encouraged that they would be able to reach settlement without a conciliation board.

Mr. Winch: Do I understand that a conciliator was not requested as reported in the newspapers?

Mr. Mackasey: I have not read the papers on that particular subject.

[*Translation:*]

COMPANY OF YOUNG CANADIANS

OPINION OF LIBERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AS TO JUDICIAL INQUIRY

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to the Prime Minister.