

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

Minister; it is supplementary to the question put a few minutes ago by the Leader of the Opposition and concerns precisely the brief mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, the brief of the federal government written for the federal-provincial conference today.

Could the Acting Prime Minister tell us whether it is true that this brief was distributed yesterday in English only, and that no French copy could be given to the members of the Quebec delegation?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the exact situation is, but I am sure that the Prime Minister is not responsible for the distribution of the brief in one language only. I am almost certain it was insisted on that the brief be distributed in both languages. However, I shall inquire.

[English]

[Later:]

**Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance or in his absence his parliamentary secretary. Would the minister advise the house whether the question of reciprocity between the Canada student loan plan and the Quebec student loan plan is on the agenda for the federal-provincial conference starting today, and I make particular reference to the right of Quebec residents to use these loans at universities outside the province of Quebec?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean Chrétien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I take due note of the interesting statement made by the hon. member and I shall bring it to the attention of the Minister of Finance.

[English]

#### LABOUR CONDITIONS

##### PAYMENT OF TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS FOR DISPLACED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquillam):** Mr. Speaker, before directing a question to the Minister of Labour perhaps I might be permitted to say to Your Honour that if you should decide to send a message of condolence to the unhappy people of Aberfan, expressing the deep sympathy of this house on the agonizing tribulation which has befallen upon them, I feel certain it would meet with the approval of members in all parts of this chamber.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his suggestion. I, of course, would be very pleased to consider it a duty and do it forthwith.

**Mr. Douglas:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that it is now over a year and a half since the Canada-United States auto agreement was signed, how soon will the minister be able to give us a firm policy decision with respect to the transitional assistance payments which were promised by the former minister of labour to Oshawa workers who were thrown out of work as a result of that agreement?

**Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour):** And as promised by the present Minister of Labour. As I have said, I hope to be able to make an announcement regarding this matter within a matter of days. A very important meeting has been arranged for next Tuesday between the international representative and other officials of the automobile workers' association, two of my cabinet colleagues and myself, and I hope to be in a position to make some announcement very shortly thereafter.

**Mr. Douglas:** As a supplementary question may I ask the minister, is it intended to make these TAB payments mandatory upon the auto manufacturing companies?

**Mr. Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, until government policy has been settled I cannot say whether there will be any change from the present practice or not. I only know that this meeting is to take place to pursue earlier discussions which have raised questions of importance that deserve and are receiving consideration by the government.

**Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario):** As a supplementary question to the Minister of Industry—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) is rising on a question of privilege.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege for a very simple reason: it is the right of all hon. members of this house to be treated on an equal basis.