Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Starr: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, are we launching into a debate?

Mr. Speaker: That is a very good comment. I would draw attention to the proposition made by the Minister of Finance.

CANADIAN LIVESTOCK FEED BOARD

WITHDRAWAL AND REPLACEMENT OF RESOLUTION PRECEDING BILL

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated at the close of the sitting on Wednesday last, item No. 48 on the order paper, being a resolution preceding the introduction of a measure to establish a corporation to be known as the Canadian livestock feed board, has an inadvertent omission in it. It has been drawn to my attention that a provision in the bill is neither provided for nor referred to in the resolution. I would ask the unanimous consent of the house to withdraw the existing item No. 48 and replace it by the new and correct version.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the minister point out what is the change?

Mr. McIlraith: The only change in the resolution is the addition at the end thereof of the words:

—plus any amount advanced to the board as authorized by the Governor in Council pursuant to the said measure.

I may say that His Excellency the Governor General recommends the resolution to the consideration of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Has the minister leave of the house to substitute the revised resolution which has been recommended to the house by His Excellency the Governor General, to replace the resolution appearing as item No. 48 on the order paper?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

HOUSING

REPORTED LAY-OFFS THROUGH SHORTAGE OF MORTGAGE MONEY

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct this question to the Minister of Labour. It arises out of his statement regarding government policy in respect of loans and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Since making that announcement has the minister been advised by builders organizations and other ancillary trades across Canada that there have been an increasing number of lay-offs in construction; and in the face of these seriously increasing lay-offs in the building and ancillary trades is the government giving consideration to making provision for additional amounts of mortgage money, instead of requiring builders to find their own funds elsewhere at interest rates that are prohibitive?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have had a few such communications, but not nearly as many as I had expected having regard to some of the representations which were made before the announcement was made. The government has the matter under constant study, but I do not contemplate any change in our policy as announced earlier in the week.

INDUSTRY

COPPER—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBLE PRICE INCREASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that the cost of living index for April was 4 per cent higher than for the same month in the previous year, has the attention of the minister been drawn to the fact that some of the copper producing companies are likely to raise their domestic price above the present level of 45 cents a pound and if so is the government planning to take any action to prevent this increase which could stimulate another rise in the cost of living?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of the intention of the copper producers. I do know something about the copper situation. My colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce has taken measures to protect the domestic supply. The measures the government has taken have had a very moderating effect on the price, which is much lower in Canada than it is in many parts of the world.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. I should like to ask the minister to tell us how it is that the United States, with all the inflationary pressures in that country, is keeping copper at a price of 36 cents when it is not possible for the Canadian government to keep the price at 45 cents?