

Inquiries of the Ministry

Department of Labour to take the credit for this settlement, I think the head of the conciliation branch, Mr. Kelly, would be the first to say that the terms of settlement were arrived at independently of the Department of Labour. I think hon. members should realize that we were there only to assist the two parties to arrive at a settlement, and they arrived at a settlement, including wages, independently of the Department of Labour. I would like to take this opportunity, rather than on motions, to pay particular tribute to the B.C. Federation of Labour which proved to be a very positive force in arriving at the settlement.

EFFECT ON WAGE DEMANDS OF INCREASED RENTS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Labour whether it is the view and the experience of his department that the shortage of housing with the resultant increase in rents is a factor in the wage demands put forward?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance made it quite clear in his statement on Monday that he regards unfair rents, high rents, as a cause of inflation, and I understand Dr. Young did obtain from the provinces—I must remind the House that rents come under provincial jurisdiction—recognition of this. There is nothing to prevent the Premier of Ontario, for example, from imposing rent controls. This is one tangible way in which the provinces can show that they pay more than lip service to the fight against inflation.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct one further supplementary to the Minister of Labour, a man who is sincerely interested in this whole issue. Would he use the influence that I am sure he has with the Prime Minister to persuade the Prime Minister to abandon his reticence and the rather arrogant way that he is treating the House and tell the House whether the government has a program to deal with this matter?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

INDUSTRY

GOLD MINES—ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING FREEING OF DOLLAR EXCHANGE RATE

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

After the adoption of the floating exchange rate for the Canadian dollar, Canadian gold mines are losing revenues and a good many marginal mines which attract American funds to Canada and which provide employment for Canadians will undoubtedly have to close down. Does the minister have any measures in mind to help the gold mining industry and improve this situation?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, a week or so ago, along with my colleague the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion I met with citizens of the gold mining areas concerning gold mining assistance, and I understand that this morning the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources met with gold producers to discuss this particular problem.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—SUGGESTED MEETING OF PRIME MINISTER AND LABOUR LEADERS

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that Ontario and Quebec made it very clear that they do not intend to enforce the 6 per cent wage increase guideline, and in view of the very strong and recent reiteration by the leaders of organized labour that they do not intend to pay any attention to the government's 6 per cent guideline, a position which, judged by the announcement which was just made by the Minister of Labour—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should not make a statement; he should ask his question.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, sometimes I find it necessary to put the Prime Minister in the picture. In view of these facts, does the Prime Minister not consider that the time has now arrived for him to call together the leaders of organized labour to try to persuade them that they should give their co-operation in order to make anti-inflation policies workable in this country?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I attempted such a meeting some months ago, with the success which is now judged by the hon. member, but perhaps he could invite the leaders of organized labour himself and convince them.

Mr. Stanfield: Well, we will try. Somebody had better do something.