

whether or not the union has accepted that there is no way in which the government's financial offer will be increased. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he has been advised of any significant change of events that would lead to negotiations being resumed in the very near future.

Mr. Trudeau: I must say that I have not been advised by the union that they accepted the government's position, and that is presumably why the strike is going on. I do know that there have been some officious meetings with the representatives of the Post Office and of the union. I do not know to what extent they are publicly known and I would hesitate to say any more at this time.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—REASON FOR GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO INTRODUCE BACK TO WORK LEGISLATION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I assume the Prime Minister is using the word "officious" in the sense of the French language, as distinguished from official. I would like to ask the Prime Minister the following question. In view of the extent to which the government has already limited the scope of collective bargaining under the government's guidelines laying down the increases in wages which are permissible, how does the government justify its continued refusal to intervene to protect the public interest and what is the government's real reason for not asking parliament to restore this essential service?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I answered these very same questions at the end of last week. My answers are the same.

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the government has called upon parliament for legislation to end strikes three times in the past two years, and in view of the fact that the stoppages in two of these instances, namely, the dock strike at the west coast and the strike at the St. Lawrence ports, were of a much shorter duration than the present 36 days of the postal shutdown, will the Prime Minister now clarify the government's reasons for refusing to introduce back to work legislation so that mail service can be restored while negotiation or mediation is carried on?

Mr. Speaker: In respect of answers which have been given on previous days to that particular question, of course the situation changes each day, and therefore a fresh question is always permissible, even though the same question had been asked 24 hours earlier, which is special in circumstances of this sort. However, it would be a flagrant abuse of the rules to allow the repetition of a question by two consecutive members on the same day, a question which has been answered by the Prime Minister and which is precisely the one the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra seeks to put.

Oral Questions

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ANTI-INFLATION GUIDELINES—REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF STATEMENTS CONCERNING APPLICABILITY OF GUIDELINES TO OIL COMPANIES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister arising from answers given by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on Friday. The Minister of Finance said in the House in reply to a question about the price of oil and the guidelines, and I quote: "they do apply to petroleum companies as they do to anyone else, but not to the OPEC countries", he said with insight. However, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said in reply to a question by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands that indeed the white paper makes it clear that the oil industry is in a separate category from those covered by the white paper. I wonder if the Prime Minister would clarify this apparent contradiction between the two ministers' statements.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I apologize, I have not had time to review *Hansard* for Friday, but I think I can explain what puzzles the hon. member. In so far as the price of crude is concerned, obviously the guidelines do not apply because it is set by federal-provincial agreement. It was set for a period of 15 months, I believe, until July 1 next, and the federal and provincial governments plan to get together in the first half of next year to try to arrive at another agreed price for petroleum. In that sense, the guidelines do not apply. The price is set administratively by arrangement.

In another sense, the guidelines do apply, and in that sense the companies will not be able to increase their prices by more than the increase in their costs. That is the general rule of the guidelines, and it will apply to them. In this case the cost of the raw material will be fixed administratively, as I have just indicated. The labour costs will be fixed by bargaining under the rules. There may be other costs, such as executive salaries, and so on. All these various costs will fall under the guidelines, and the pass through rule will apply.

Mr. Broadbent: In view of the fact that the principal reason for price increases in oil in the last few years has been the increase in the wellhead price, which the Prime Minister just said has been settled in the past by negotiations with the provinces, and since, however, the government in its white paper sets out that in terms of its policy it will permit, through a staging process, the wellhead price to rise to world price levels, has the government not stated its position, in terms of its ultimate effect on the consumer price, that it has decided not to keep the price of oil down in Canada?

Mr. Trudeau: The reason the price at the wellhead has been allowed to rise—although considerably less than world prices—is due, first of all, to the decision of the OPEC nations to increase the world price of oil. This put pressure on the NDP and Conservative governments in particular provinces in the west to seek a higher price, preferably world prices, if they could. We resisted the NDP and Tory governments as much as we could and obtained a compromise, which we think is much better for Canadian