

Inquiries of the Ministry

Prime Minister. The dominion bureau of statistics daily bulletin shows that the cost of living index is now at an all time high of 134, basis of 100 in 1949. It is up six tenths of one percentage point for the last two months and up over two percentage points in the last 12 months. I would like to ask the Prime Minister, has the government any plans in mind for dealing with this very serious situation?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government shares my hon. friend's concern at this rise and is giving the matter consideration, but I cannot make an announcement at this moment on orders of the day on any specific steps that might be taken at this time.

BRIDGESTHREE RIVERS, QUE.—POSSIBLE REVOCATION
OF ORDER IN COUNCIL

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clement Vincent (Nicolet-Yamaska): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister?

Has the Prime Minister been officially informed of the difficulties which exist between the corporation of the Three Rivers bridge and the Minister of Transport (Mr. McIlraith) with regard to the order in council of last March 4?

[*Text*]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I know of these difficulties.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?

Does the Prime Minister intend to make a statement before long on that matter, thus offering a nice present to the citizens of my area?

[*Text*]

Mr. Pearson: I hope this matter will be cleared up in the near future, Mr. Speaker.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INQUIRY AS TO POSITION OF FUND

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Labour?

Would the minister inform the house of the financial situation of the unemployment insurance fund and tell us how he intends to replenish it in case of a deficit?

[*Mr. Douglas.*]

[*Text*]

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I have already given an indication, on behalf of the government, of the method to be followed in replenishing the fund at any time that is necessary. That method is well known and has been employed on several occasions in the past. As to the exact status of the fund at the moment, I have not the details but I will be glad to get them for my hon. friend.

FINANCEREPORTED STATEMENT BY HEALTH MINISTER
RESPECTING INSURANCE COMPANIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Guy Marcoux (Quebec-Montmorency): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the right hon. Prime Minister. A similar question was answered yesterday by the Minister of Finance. It arises out of the statement made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare that insurance companies can go bankrupt, like any other company. It is stated in this morning's *Gazette*, in an editorial:

—it would be as well if the Prime Minister himself publicly corrected this serious error, no matter how it came to be made.

Would the Prime Minister like to make a statement at this moment?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. I was not in the house yesterday, but I read what my hon. friend the Minister of Finance said and I quite agree with his statement.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Prime Minister agree that even though insurance companies are not likely to go broke, there is a greater possibility of their going broke than the government of Canada?

Mr. Nowlan: No, not the present government.

Mr. Pearson: I certainly agree with the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, Mr. Speaker.

LABOUR RELATIONSMARITIME UNIONS—REQUEST FOR REPORT
BY TRUSTEES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question of the Minister of Labour. Will the minister be presenting to parliament, before the session prorogues, an interim report of the trustees of the maritime transportation unions?