

*Anti-Inflation Act*

the most hypocritical statements ever formulated in Canada.

● (1720)

On June 11, 1974, there was a big meeting in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe. It was held in Marieville and 60 people were assembled in the yard, in the hall of the Marieville school to listen to the former Minister of Communications. Most of them were election organizers and returning officers in Marieville. They heard the Minister of Communications say:

Inflation is essentially an international problem and—

His words must still echo in their minds—

—and nothing can be done about the price of oranges and bananas.

Madam Speaker, there was a banana peel waiting for the minister's successor in the riding of Hochelaga. That was realized last Tuesday. I cannot resist pointing out the grand statement from the godfather of federal Liberals in Quebec, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), because he also has been slapped in the face in Hochelaga, and I am not referring to the scolding he received from his colleagues in the caucus. His colleagues were quite surprised to realize that the leader of the Liberal members from Quebec had spent all his time in New Brunswick and forgotten the Hochelaga riding. But that is a different story.

Well, he was saying: "The Progressive Conservative Party which wants to hurt the weak, the wage-earners, the farmers, the small businessmen is irresponsible when it suggests limiting government expenses. Yes, these are huge expenses, but they are necessary, and limiting them is out of the question."

Madam Speaker, if I am saying these things to you, it is because men have short memories. Women's memories are not so short. And because men's memories are short, we must remind our hon. friends opposite about these previous statements. What is more, they must explain to us how they came to this complete about-face which is absolutely unique in political history.

Something is clear. In 1974, Liberal party candidates sought a mandate from the Canadian people. They asked them for their votes to form a majority government, with the assurance that they were against any form of control.

Subsequently, here in this House, those same backers were quick to tell the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and my colleagues that the people of Canada had rejected our party and had rejected controls.

Well, Madam Speaker, today I am telling the government that prior to undertaking a promotional campaign which will cost millions of dollars to convince Canadians that they should accept the measures that are now advocated and had been rejected earlier, that before doing that, the government should in all fairness and honesty confess to the people that they were wrong, that they made a mistake, that they lied to them, that they sought from them a mandate under false representations, and that today they feel the obligation of returning before them.

The government has no other alternative, and I challenge them to return before the people of this country whom they have misled. They should go and ask the

[Mr. Wagner.]

population for a true mandate; they should tell them the truth once and for all instead of behaving like cynical and machiavellian politicians. Let them have the courage to call an election and in less than a month they will either come back with an explicit mandate to impose such controls or not come back at all because voters will have put them in their place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but he certainly knows that he must address himself to the Chair and not to government members.

**Mr. Wagner:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, I even wonder how I could have forgotten you—

**An hon. Member:** I apologize!

**Mr. Wagner:** I apologize. So, since an election may be called tonight, I ought perhaps to shorten my speech, but, Madam Speaker, I hear them laugh. They will cling to power for another three years. They will continue to deceive Canadians, and stay in power under false representations. They will wallow in that ridiculous performance which the people have recognized as such; under the circumstances, as there is no hope for them, I shall continue to speak to them anyway. Madam Speaker, I should like—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** Order. The hon. member has alluded to power under false representations. I am sure the hon. member used words which exceed his thoughts, that he did not mean what he said.

**Mr. Wagner:** No, Madam Speaker. I merely wished to point out that when a political party seeks a mandate from the people it should do so honestly. If it changes its mind along the way, it should also have enough integrity to go again to the people.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, it becomes increasingly clear that as time progresses, this government has made ad hockery into a veritable philosophy of government. These economic measures which have now found their way into Bill C-73 indicate, as I was mentioning a few moments ago, that what was unacceptable last year, last month and last week, is the only answer today, at least if one is to take the present policy of this government seriously. I think that much of the effectiveness of this program depends upon the will of Canadians to make it work, and that in turn depends upon the credibility of the program and the credibility of the government that brought it forward.

I was referring a few moments ago to the fantastic about-turn that this government has made in its economic policies. I am looking now at the seat occupied by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Turner) and asking myself whether he declined to maintain his ministerial rank through a respect for principle or as a result of his inability to admit a fundamental error. Either way, the government is worse off for not having him as part of their economic pain.

The question is, are the people of Canada prepared to be part of this government's economic pain? In many respects, there are so many injustices and so many inequi-