

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—SOURCE OF LIST OF FIRMS WITH WHICH BOARD COMMUNICATED

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance arising from the list of firms to which the Anti-Inflation Board has written about the enforcement of the government's price and profit guidelines. Could the minister confirm that the government was forced to purchase this list, in whole or in part, from outside commercial sources because it did not itself have the necessary information available?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I had not heard that suggestion before, but I will be glad to inquire.

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—REASON FOR OMISSION OF SOME FIRMS FROM LIST OF THOSE COVERED BY GUIDELINES

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Can the minister explain why a number of the major corporations in categories supposedly covered by the government's guidelines are not on the list? For example, three of Canada's largest development companies—Bramalea, Consolidated Building and McLaughlin—are not on the list. I ask this in view of the fact we have been told this list was to cover even the smallest construction firms.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know exactly the source of the list, but I understand there was not information available exactly corresponding to the guidelines. Indeed, some firms were included which should not have been and others were left off. I understand that upon public response, the board has since gone out to remedy these deficiencies.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Since the names of many of the major corporate power centres in this country, including this government's great friend, Power Corporation, are missing from the list, is it government policy that such companies will be free to manipulate management fees and other inter-corporate relationships with their various subsidiaries without any active surveillance by the Anti-Inflation Board? Was that the policy of the government in the preparation of this list?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): No, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member might observe in reading the bill, where a corporation has consolidated its financial reports into a single one, where there is this control as deemed by the Income Tax Act, that applies to the company and all of its corporate affiliates. Of course, they all would be covered. Whether the corporation which the hon. member mentioned did that or not, I will look into that. Indeed, I was proposing to lay the list before the committee. However, I would point out to the hon. member that the response to the final part of his question is decidedly not.

Oral Questions

ANTI-INFLATION BOARD—MEMBERS SUBJECT TO CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that a number of the members of the new Anti-Inflation Board hold directorships in a number of corporations, is it the view of the government that these members of the board shall be subject to the government guidelines of conflict of interest and accordingly resign these directorships forthwith?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the general answer is yes. I have not looked into each particular case, but those members of the board whom I did contact personally raised this matter with me. It was understood that they would resign the directorships.

ANTI-INFLATION BOARD—INQUIRY WHETHER REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): In view of the fact that the success of the board will depend largely upon the degree of public support it is able to generate across the country, is it the intention of the government to ensure that the board reports from time to time to the public and operates generally within the public domain, given the wide discretionary powers that it has, or is it the view of the government that the board should operate in secrecy and report to the government in the same vein?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance tells me this is already provided for in the bill, namely that there will be public reports and public activities. The Anti-Inflation Board is perceived as an organization that will go out and help people understand about inflation, its causes and how they are trying to remedy it. I see the board very much like the former Food Prices Review Board under Mrs. Plumpton which had a great effect on persuading the public of its activities and communicating with them.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

INVOCATION OF WAR MEASURES ACT IN 1970—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Following recent statements by Premier Bourassa and the Hon. Eric Kierans, a member of the federal cabinet in 1970, to the effect that neither of these gentlemen believed that an apprehended insurrection or state that would be appropriately described by that phrase existed in the province of Quebec at the time of invocation of the War Measures Act, and since such action involved a major infringement upon the civil liberties of Canadians, is it the intention of the government to proceed with an inquiry under the Inquiries Act which could lead to a full investigation into the justification for the invocation of that act?