

## Oral Questions

[English]

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

MR. HEES—CONGRATULATIONS ON SIXTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, before I ask my first question perhaps I might do something I think the Prime Minister would want to do were he here and not engaged in official duties as the Prime Minister in launching Senior Citizens' Week. In the circumstances, I think the Prime Minister would like me to congratulate the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings on achieving his sixty-fifth birthday.

● (1410)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his very kind remarks, and members of the House for their kind reception of those remarks. I would say that since I arrived here 25 years ago I have seen many things happen, but I have never seen a better House, better members and better friends than there are in this House at the present time.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, due to my responsibility for senior citizens' programs I might say that yesterday I presented to two prominent senior citizens, Senator Thérèse Casgrain, and Mr. Fred Wright of Calgary, the first identity cards for senior citizens; but I am keeping a special one for the hon. member and will make a special presentation to him very shortly, as soon as I have his application for old age security.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lalonde:** I might add that if the hon. member wishes to make an application under the New Horizons program, I will certainly give it very careful consideration.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, some of us have particular pleasure in welcoming the hon. member to the club.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## LABOUR CONDITIONS

CANADIAN WAGE AND SALARY INCREASES VIS-À-VIS THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, as a manifestation of the friendship to which the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings just alluded, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour who I am sure noticed that the Minister of Finance said recently that Canada's wage and salary increases are

[Mr. Speaker.]

roughly double those in the United States and seriously endanger our competitive position and major economic goals. He added that this is not a myth, that he has the figures to prove it and that they will be published. Can the Minister of Labour tell the House, in the special capacities and responsibilities he assumes, whether he accepts those figures and the analysis of the Minister of Finance?

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, in the sense of friendliness which prevails here, I would urge the Leader of the Opposition to read my complete speech. I indicated that there were some outstandingly high settlements in Canada which could be interpreted in many ways as being double those in the United States, and that something had to be done in the sense of urging restraint in this area as in many other areas of the economy. If the hon. member will look at the entire speech, he will find I indicated that it is possible to make very many statistical interpretations concerning what is going on in respect of wages generally. So, despite the issue the Leader of the Opposition wishes to make of it, I do not believe this is fundamental in terms of any disagreement with my colleague the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, am I, then, to take it that the Minister of Labour accepts the view and the analysis of the Minister of Finance that Canadian wage and salary increases are roughly double those in the United States and seriously endanger our economic position and economic goals?

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** Along with other factors that are contributing to the general inflationary situation which the Minister of Finance and I identified, I agree.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, in order to remove any possible confusion which might exist, do I take it that the Minister of Labour no longer is asserting that it is a myth that wage and salary settlements in this country are nearly double those in the United States?

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, I do not dispute the statistics revealed by the Minister of Finance. I am indicating that there are various interpretations one could place on them, but I am certainly not disputing the figures.

FALL IN LABOUR'S SHARE OF NATIONAL INCOME—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, so that I will not become involved in the squabble between the two ministers, I should like to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. As Bank of Canada figures indicate that labour's relative share of national income has fallen from 75 per cent in the first quarter of 1971 to 73.3 per cent in the first quarter of this year, after touching a low of 70 per cent in 1973, can the Acting Prime Minister indicate whether it is the government's policy that labour should not regain the share of national income which it has lost between 1970 and the present?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** That is not government policy, no.