

shoulders of the hon. member for Windsor West and of the Minister of Finance. They are the ones who stonewalled and wasted time and they must bear the blame for the mess the program is in. I believe it is in a mess.

Here we are, four months after the legislation has been put in place, considering amendments to the act. Only seven of the ten provinces have signed the anti-inflation program. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) has asked the Supreme Court to give an opinion on the constitutional aspects of Bill C-73. I see by today's newspaper, in a *Canadian Press* report, that Nova Scotia has delayed signing the pact because the province wants to exclude teachers' wage settlements from the provisions of the legislation.

Why did the Minister of Justice decide to send the original bill, Bill C-73, to the Supreme Court for an opinion? The action was not prompted by his department or by the Minister of Finance. The constitutional aspect was raised during the committee hearings by my hon. friend from York-Simcoe and by my hon. friend from Edmonton West. Their efforts came to nothing at that time. What really prompted the Minister of Justice to take action was pressure from the provinces, and particularly from the province of Ontario in connection with the attitude of the teachers in Prescott. As the bill now stands we are dealing with more double standard legislation, and I think this is regrettable.

Teachers in Halton and other areas were denied historical wage adjustments or saw previous settlements rolled back, while Nova Scotia delayed signing the agreement because, in its view, the teachers should be exempt; they might have a good point, they might have some catch-up wage settlement, and apparently nothing could be done about that under the legislation. Had we been able to hear the views of all these people during the committee stage I am sure we would not find ourselves in this mess today. I hope this serves as a lesson to members on the government side not to take, in future, such action as they took to ram a piece of legislation down the throat of a standing committee.

Bill C-89 is really a sop. It cleans up a number of definitions and it allows appeals from decisions taken by the Anti-Inflation Board, a point members of this party made when the legislation was before the standing committee, only to be voted down by the Liberal majority. Most of the changes proposed in the measure before us could have been dealt with when Bill C-73 was before the committee if proper and adequate hearings had been held.

We note that the Anti-Inflation Board has a backlog of a thousand cases yet to be heard. Now we are told that the board, by order in council, will add 41,000 new companies to the list of those subject to the guidelines. We note that the trucking industry is to be brought under the guidelines, together with construction, shipping, longshoring, and grain handling. I question this move, particularly as it affects the trucking industry.

I do not think there is another industry in the country which is subject to as many controls as the trucking industry. When one thinks of the multiplicity of the federal, provincial, and municipal regulations in this field one wonders why anyone would wish to be in the business. Yet it is a vital part of our economy. At a time when rail lines

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in Western Canada are being abandoned and the trucking of grain to and from storage elevators is just beginning to evolve as an alternative system, it might well be unwise to place trucking within the ambit of the anti-inflation legislation. Perhaps when we get to the committee stage, unless ramrod tactics are again used by the minister and his people, we can be given some explanation.

It is particularly difficult for small and medium sized trucking firms to cope with further extensions of bureaucracy; they will have to add yet another layer of record-keeping to those with which they are already burdened. I am sure this will cause many of the small and medium sized companies to sell out to larger competitors. The question we have to ask ourselves is whether this is in the national interest. The same argument applies to construction companies. As I read the regulations the guidelines will now extend to the one-man operation. To impose added record keeping on these people will, I am sure, cause them to question whether they can continue in business.

● (2130)

It is obvious to all concerned that the Ontario teachers' contracts should have been viewed in a different light. The provisions of this legislation caused disruption in the school year, put the teaching profession in conflict with students and the population in general, and cast the whole profession in a light unbecoming to the dedicated people who comprise that profession. By their actions the government and the board disregarded existing contracts and agreements, denied the historical background of those agreements, and chose the role of confrontation. By their actions they built up regional disparities, and indeed disparities within a region.

Just where is this legislation going, Mr. Speaker? We see important decisions, such as the one to drop the export levy and the recent order in council to bring under the anti-inflation regulations another 41 companies, being made by the governor in council. Parliament is left to debate housekeeping items and to clean up sloppy drafting, interpretation, or translation. I say this is really perverting the role of parliament and the committee system that we have attached to this institution.

There is a provision in the bill to terminate the legislation prior to December 31, 1978. This causes me to wonder whether the government, having launched a program which for years it said would not work, is preparing to abandon it in another pronouncement from the Prime Minister that inflation has been beaten or is under control. Certainly pressure is building to have the profit provisions of the legislation removed or modified. Businessmen are finding it hard sledding to expand their operations and thus reduce unemployment by employing more people. They find it extremely difficult to plan and project growth with an anti-inflation program that has so many strings attached.

The chairman of the Anti-Inflation Board keeps telling the business community that the board is going through a learning process. While this learning process is under way, decisions by the business community are being put off, stalled, pushed into the future, or in fact abandoned altogether. I have personal knowledge of several companies that have been planning extensions to their plants but