

*Oral Questions***THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—SUGGESTION FOOD CHAINS
SUBMIT TO BOARD PRICES CHARGED BEFORE AND AFTER
ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROGRAM**

Mr. Dinsdale: There is an obvious fuzziness appearing at the fringe in getting to the root of this post office problem as the bargaining goes on through the media rather than through the established procedures.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dinsdale: In view of the fact that the leaders of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers have indicated, again through the media, that they are willing to continue negotiations based on the fringe issues rather than the wage packet, and in view of the same statement by the minister and other government spokesmen that they are willing to return to the bargaining process to consider these fringe issues, will the Postmaster General now clarify the matter by stating that this is the government's position so that we might get the postal workers back to work to continue this vitally important service?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, one party in the House that did refuse to help the postal workers was the NDP. I think that was the statement of the C.U.P.W. leader out in Winnipeg the other evening. The last time we were in direct consultation with the postal workers—I am not sure which spokesman it was, but one of them—it was clearly understood we were prepared to continue bargaining and we had not considered at any time breaking off bargaining. We invited them to come back to the bargaining table when they had finalized their own position in so far as the wage packet was concerned, and then we would see to the fringe benefits which are also monetary items.

I might point out to the hon. gentleman that if there were no anti-inflation board or anti-inflation campaign, the money we would offer CUPW would be precisely the same as is being offered now because of the fact that the letter carriers have this settlement, and because of the recommendation of the chairman of the conciliation board, who is certainly a very neutral gentleman and a judge of the superior court whose advice we gladly accepted. So the offer to CUPW is based first on the relationship to the settlement with the letter carriers, with whom they must work side by side, and secondly on the report of the conciliation board chairman. The effect of the Anti-Inflation Board simply means that the settlement, when and if it is arrived at, will have to go to the board for ratification or rejection, one or the other.

As far as resuming negotiations, my offer is open and there would be no better gesture of goodwill that would be appreciated by the Canadian people, and an indication of their willingness and sincerity, than for the union to invite the workers to go back to work while the negotiations are going on, because the strike they called was useless and futile, and does not in the slightest add any pressure on the minister who runs the post office.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the government or perhaps the chairman of the Anti-Inflation Board would ask the major food distribution chains, Safeway, Loblaws, Steinberg and Dominion stores to submit to the board their price lists for the two weeks prior and the two weeks following the announcement of the government's anti-inflation policy in order that the board can ascertain whether in fact prices are being raised, particularly in view of reports from all parts of Canada that these companies seem to have at least anticipated the government's policies and raised many prices over the Thanksgiving weekend?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the suggestion of the hon. member is a very sensible one. I do hope we can get this bill into committee so this kind of suggestion can be made to the board. The board can be summoned and suggestions can be made directly. Moreover, this would finally give the teeth that is now lacking in the present law.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

**ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—POSSIBILITY OF BOARD
PUBLISHING INFORMATION ON PRICE INCREASES**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, surely the board does not need to wait for the legislation to make such inquiries. In view of the thoughts expressed by many people to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour yesterday that the wage and salary restraints will be easy for the Board to monitor, but that increases in prices will be difficult if not impossible to police, will the government impress on the Anti-Inflation Board the necessity to make as much information as possible on price increases which the board will be looking into available to the public so that Canadians can be informed concerning the effect of the government's policy as the weeks and months go by.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in general agreement. It is our view, as I think it is his, that the board should be as diligent as possible in checking both wages and prices, and I only hope he agrees with me that we should get this legislation through so that there will be something the board can do to implement our policies.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, do I understand from the Acting Prime Minister that the inferences in respect of the legislation drawn by at least one if not more of the provincial governments, which are being made known to the Prime Minister today, are that the investigation which the board will make in respect of companies will be made in private and based on confidential information the board receives and that the board is not likely to identify the companies which are alleged to have raised prices, that in fact the board will not be giving the kind of information