

the program put before us in recent weeks, this government should have to come to parliament to get parliament's permission to do so.

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

**Mr. Stanfield:** What right has the government to ask this parliament for a blank cheque?

**An hon. Member:** It's only three years instead of 18 months.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Yes, and any program you want to write in the meantime. You can fool the people some of the time, but the government is going to find out that it cannot keep shifting positions all the time. I also want to emphasize that there is nothing in what I am proposing—that is, the termination of this program in 18 months—which would put the government in a strait-jacket. If the government wants to continue controls beyond 18 months, it could introduce a bill in this House for that purpose—for example, after the expiration of 15 months—in which a specific controls program could be discussed in light of conditions which exist at that time, and not conditions which we guess about now which might exist.

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

**Mr. Stanfield:** Much can change in 15 or 18 months. If the government is concerned a fixed expiry date of April 30, 1977, and if it is concerned that unions might just hold back until the controls are off, or that business people might hold back until they are off, I would have no objection to a provision extending the bill for a further period of three months, for example, upon the government presenting to the House a resolution to that effect with a limited time for debate of three days in order to provide some degree of flexibility about the termination of the program. However, the government has not seen fit to discuss any such proposal, or any proposals at all. It has known for weeks of our concern about this. If the government thinks our support of its bill is important in terms of public acceptance, why has it not responded at all to any initiatives we have taken to try to produce a bill we could accept and support in this House?

We have tried to be constructive in dealing with both the white paper and the bill. We have not hidden anything. We tried to show our good faith by our vote on second reading of the bill and our vote on the November 14 supply day motion put forward by the New Democratic Party. We indicated that we were open to be consulted by the government on this matter. No consultation was sought. My invitation for consultation was not acted upon. If our support of the bill is important, why has the government not responded to our concern and to our overtures? I want to say very clearly that if, despite our objections and despite our concern, this bill becomes law in its present form, without our amendment having been adopted, we will certainly urge the Canadian people as forcefully as we can to co-operate with the government and to comply with the law adopted in this House.

Even before the program was announced, the Minister of Finance described the program as frightening. I therefore do not apologize for expressing my very grave concern

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about the powers parliament is being asked to delegate to the government and to the creatures of government for such an open-ended period of time. Without acceptance of our amendment, I must say that the minister's first impression was correct, as far as I am concerned. The implications of a bill with these powers and of this duration are frightening and they are unnecessary, Madam Speaker. These implications are unacceptable to me and to my colleagues.

● (1640)

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has what one would have to concede is a difficult task in this situation. We are debating a program which earlier in this debate, on second reading of the bill, he said was virtually his program. We are debating a concept which he said basically was his idea, namely, the imposition of mandatory controls on wages and prices in Canada. We are dealing with the bill which he voted for at second reading stage and in respect of which he also voted on an opposition day.

Now he finds himself in the situation where he undoubtedly has decided that in the future he will want to oppose the government's initiative in imposing wage and price controls at this particular time. He will now want to define a position for himself to be able to repeat to the public that he was against this program, a program which it is conceded will be difficult in the years and months to come in terms of the impact it will have on individual groups in Canada. Therefore, he has had to construct, for the record and for the House, a rather indignant declamation of the government and myself for having failed to respond to the initiatives which he had put forward in this regard.

Let me just deal with that one point right away, because I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition has perhaps been badly served by his research staff. He made the assertion that it was not until late in the game, well on into the committee sittings, that I gave any response whatsoever as to my willingness to respond to amendments with regard to having a parliamentary review of the bill. Perhaps I could quote to him—I will take the same stand about quoting myself that he took about himself—and refer him to my remarks on reply in the second reading debate, as reported at page 8545 of *Hansard*. On October 24, in closing debate, I said:

The question was raised at several points by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and by the hon. member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) as to whether it would be proper at some interval before the termination date of the bill to provide for a fresh parliamentary opportunity, perhaps by way of an affirmative resolution, to debate the matter. For my part I would have no difficulty in accepting an amendment of that kind.

I would just remind the House that we were then at the sixth day of the second reading debate. After my speech in introduction on second reading, I had had no further opportunity to participate in debate, but in reply at the first opportunity after hearing the hon. gentleman opposite, and in particular the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) who had seen the bill and responded to it, I indicated my willingness to provide the kind of amendment which I referred to in committee. I repeated the offer again in committee, and when nothing further was forthcoming I put it forward at report stage, at this time. I hope the