

Oral Questions

leader. After all, I am judging him simply by his actions. The Leader of the New Democratic Party stated:

We do not withdraw from the suggestion of a form of exchange controls.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member simply ask his question.

Mr. Stevens: In view of the statement made by the Leader of the New Democratic Party on May 14, will the Prime Minister now indicate to the House the current attitude of the government with respect to exchange controls?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, if the hon. member is asking me "In view of the statement made by the Leader of the NDP", you will have to let him read that statement or I cannot answer the question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1120)

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, let me put the question in the simplest possible fashion.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member now has to read the statement.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, let me put the question in the most direct way to the Prime Minister, who is simply toying with the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stevens: Would the Prime Minister indicate whether there is any serious consideration being given to the reimposition of exchange controls in Canada by his colleagues or by the cabinet itself?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Ma'am.

GOVERNMENT POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PUBLIC'S
DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Prime Minister, if I may.

As he knows, the average Canadian is being squeezed, and the concern in the country among average Canadians in respect of this squeeze is that it is going to get tighter, that real wages are falling behind—that is established by the statistics—and that there has been no energy tax credit and no mortgage interest deductibility to give relief. If the Minister of Finance and the Bank of Canada are correct in saying that higher interest rates can control inflation, is it correct then to conclude that government policy is to squeeze the public until there is no discretionary spending left? I am wondering whether the Prime Minister, in his wisdom, would have any advice for all those people who at this moment have no discretionary spending?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The answer to the question is no, Madam Speaker.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, we can certainly see how serious the government is about the plight of the average person throughout this land. We are continually told that productivity is the answer to the low Canadian dollar, our high interest rates, our imbalance of trade, our continuing demand for higher wages and benefits, and that these things can only be resolved by fiscal policies which will deliver an improved Canadian productivity to our country and our economy. Both the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister know this, as I have heard them state it so often. Will the Prime Minister advise us as to the fiscal policies the government might have in mind to deliver the incentives necessary to excite and deliver a highly productive, efficient and effective economy, which is ours by right and by heritage?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Those policies are contained in the budget, Madam Speaker.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

TERMINATION OF SERVICES OF COMBINES DIRECTOR OF
INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH—APPOINTMENT OF
SUCCESSOR

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, yesterday I raised a question about the termination of the services of Monsieur Bertrand. I would like today to direct a question specifically to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Stories associated with the termination of the services of Monsieur Bertrand included stories that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was being reorganized in such a way that the autonomy and powers of the director of investigation and research would be curtailed. Those stories were also accompanied by statements that there would be an appointment of a new director, probably one of the individuals appointed by Michael Pitfield. Would the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs give us a description of what reorganization is going on within his department at this time?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, let me first of all say that all of this is part of the very regrettable, wild speculation which took place concerning Mr. Bertrand. There is no reorganization in the department and the successor to Mr. Bertrand will be appointed soon by the cabinet, and not by Mr. Pitfield. The remark the hon. member has made about apparent linkage between reorganization of the department and the responsibility of the director of combines should not be made because the new director of combines investigation will have the same authority and power Mr. Bertrand had previously.