

Anti-Inflation Act

happen to be tied up in committee when the deferred debate takes place.

With respect to motion No. 2, again I am not in sympathy with the substance of the proposal, but it seems to me that the hon. member's right to make the motion should be defended. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Blais) suggested that motion No. 2 would delegate from the House of Commons to an outside body certain responsibilities that belong to this House of Commons. I do not read the motion that way at all. As I read the motion, what the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) is seeking is to give to the Anti-Inflation Board, amongst the studies that it can carry on, amongst the reports that it can make, the right to make a report expressing its opinion on the extent to which the government may be failing to live up to its own anti-inflationary precepts.

It is the responsibility of the government and parliament to make the final decisions. This motion does not give the board the power to make any decisions; it simply expands on the power of the board to make reports expressing opinions. I draw to the attention of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council that already in clause 12(1)(e) permission is given to the board to comment on—

—the role to be played by businesses and groups of employees in combating inflation and the implications of the failure of governments, businesses and groups of employees to co-operate in combating inflation.

Mr. Speaker, all the permission does which is already there is to give the Anti-Inflation Board the power to comment on what it believes to be governmental failures. The hon. member for York-Simcoe wants to go on and give it the power to monitor the estimates, main and supplementary, and issue its views as to the extended failures of the government. I agree in practice with what the hon. member for Nipissing is saying, that these are things we should be doing here and that we should not delegate this responsibility—even the right to make these comments—on to someone else. This is parliament's job. But at this point we are not dealing with the acceptability of the substance or the merit of the motion; we are simply dealing with the question of whether it is procedurally acceptable. I think that motion No. 2, even though I am against it in substance, should be allowed procedurally.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think I need trouble the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) on motion No. 2. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and I were saying the same thing, I think, in different words. After consideration, it is the opinion of the Chair that what is set forth in specific terms in motion No. 2 is already possible under clause 12 of the bill. If it is an unwarranted delegation of authority to have the Anti-Inflation Board comment publicly on the failure of the government to take advantage of whatever policies it has—such as control on government spending certainly would be—then it seems to me that power already exists in clause 12(1)(e) on page 12. Simply to go on and say the board ought not only to have the right, but ought to have an obligation, within a certain period, to address itself to the question of government spending as contained in the esti-

mates, seems to me to be an amendment that is procedural-ly in order.

The fact is, however, there is one other point that was made by the parliamentary secretary that would turn around the word "monitoring". If, in fact, monitoring by this board meant the kind of legislative control that exists in the standing committees of the House and, in turn, in the casting of votes in this chamber, that would certainly be a valid argument. It would seem to me, however, that "monitoring" in the terms of this legislation would simply mean that the board had to address itself to the contents of the estimates before making a public comment on them. In any case, it seems to me that the motion ought to be put and considered, and therefore, I would call motion No. 2 for discussion.

It being 3.30 p.m., I wonder if it would be appropriate to address ourselves to argument on the procedural acceptability of motion No. 1 at five o'clock? Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Before calling motion No. 2 and proceeding at this time, may I indicate that it would appear that motions Nos. 4 and 5 can usefully be grouped for debate. I think, therefore, that all motions except No. 1 are procedurally acceptable. Motion Nos. 4 and 5 might be discussed together, while motion No. 2 is being discussed, hon. members may want to comment on and consider what I am about to suggest, but it would appear to the Chair that motions Nos. 4 and 5 might be discussed together. An affirmative vote on No. 4 would be taken, I think, to be an expression of opinion on motion No. 5, but I would be prepared to hear comments on that matter.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I do not disagree that we should consider motions Nos. 4 and 5 together. I wonder, however, whether motion No. 3 should not be included since it is, in a sense, consequential and relates to a particular aspect of the limitation of the duration of the bill.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, we would be agreeable to having Nos. 3, 4 and 5 debated together. I share your view, Mr. Speaker, that Nos. 4 and 5 are one subject matter for the purpose of debate, but it seems to me that No. 3 should be put in with them. To bring Nos. 3, 4 and 5 together would, I suggest, facilitate debate in the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have been persuaded while I have been listening. It was to have been my suggestion to put Nos. 3 and 4 together and let No. 5 go by itself, but if the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) does not mind No. 5 being put with the other two, we will not object but that grouping is for debate only.

Mr. Speaker: Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 5 will be grouped together for debate. Motion No. 3 will be voted upon separately. Hon. members might consider whether an affirmative vote on motion No. 4 might constitute an expression of opinion, obviating the necessity for a vote on motion No. 5. Perhaps this can be left for later, if necessary. Certainly, votes can be taken on each motion.