

Oral Questions

expectations, he and his colleagues have grossly underestimated the expansion of the economy.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that response is just about as irrelevant as the forecast was.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the minister whether in fact he and his officials were trying to make an accurate forecast or were simply predicting a balanced budget for the current fiscal year for the purpose of creating an uncertain atmosphere with regard to the budget he was presenting?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the forecast was based on an anticipation of what parliament might be able to accomplish. That has not been the case. There is certain legislation upon which that forecast was based which has not been passed. The economy is reflecting a growth that has boosted sales and import taxes and the increase in employment is even stronger than we forecast, so that revenues were stronger than those we forecast.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister if this serious miscalculation of government finances and accounts is in any way related to the 180 degree change in government planning and priorities contained in the cabinet document which the Prime Minister refused to table the other day, and will the minister explain or rationalize this change in direction which, if taken in civilian life, would come perilously close to obtaining by false pretences?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I do not recall the Prime Minister commenting upon that alleged document to any extent at all.

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INDUSTRY

MEETING OF CABINET MINISTERS AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS—
REPORTED MEETING OF MINDS

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of reports that several cabinet ministers met last Friday with representatives of 13 business organizations and that it was a real meeting of the minds on the important question of our economic development, would the minister, who was present at that meeting, be good enough to indicate what this meeting of minds consisted of and whether this meeting of minds means that the multimillion dollar grants from the federal treasury, and especially from the minister's department, to private enterprise will continue in the same haphazard fashion and in the same over-generous amounts?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the meeting that took place on Friday was a meeting to hear and consider the views of industry with respect to the question of an industrial

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

strategy for Canada. The basis of the discussion was a compendium of views of over 200 pages. There was discussion by various industrial associations as to their approach to the industrial strategy question, and discussion by myself and my colleagues as to our approach. The phrase "meeting of minds" I think reflected the view of the businessmen present and our approach to development of an industrial strategy. In other words, their objectives and strategies for the industrial development of Canada are very much on the same wavelength.

MEETING OF CABINET MINISTERS AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS—
INQUIRY AS TO DISCUSSION OF FURTHER GRANTS TO
BELL CANADA AND TELEPHONE RATES

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Given that the chief spokesmen for the business community were Messrs. Wolff and Marquez, chief executive officers of Bell Canada subsidiaries, would the minister indicate to the House whether federal grants additional to the \$40-odd million granted so far to Bell Telephone and its subsidiaries were discussed at the meeting and could the minister tell the House whether there was any meeting of minds on the matter of Bell Telephone rates? Also, can the minister announce that Bell Canada rates are going to be rolled back?

• (1420)

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, there was no consideration of questions such as grants or rates, but there was a consideration of long-term objectives for Canada. They were spelled out in a paper which was presented for purposes of discussion, and I think there was a genuine meeting of minds as to what the long-term objectives of "an industrial strategy" for Canada might be and how industry might play its part in meeting those objectives.

Mr. Saltzman: In view of the non-answers we are getting from the minister, would the minister please be kind enough to make available to the House the text of his speech so we can interpret what he said to that meeting?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I would be very pleased to submit a copy of my notes to the hon. member on another occasion.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby on a supplementary, and then the hon. member for St. John's East.

CHANGES IN AUTOMOTIVE POLICY AS PART OF
INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY—RESUMPTION OF TRADE TALKS
WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As one part of an industrial strategy for the country includes the automobile industry, I wonder whether the minister is in a position now to say when the government will be announcing its changes in the automotive policy. Related to that, may I ask whether the minister is in a position to announce