

*Anti-Inflation Act*

with some weaknesses of course. In fact, the situation changes, the needs change and a measure we pass in all objectivity today will not necessarily meet the needs of the situation within one year, within five years. This is why this House and this system should be flexible.

Three days of debate to know if the government should put an immediate end to controls, Mr. Speaker, this is too much. One day would have been enough. Several editorialists, several reports, several people who have been studying that debate already came to the conclusion that it has lasted too long, that one day would have been enough to put the question and present the issue. A speaker from each party would have been enough. It started Wednesday, this is the fourth day. I am wrong, Mr. Speaker. I realize that it really took a long time.

Two or three speakers from the main opposition parties, Mr. Speaker, should normally have been able to present the views of their party. Three or four speakers from the government could also have answered, and then the problem could have been solved. But no, we are in a fourth day of debating if the control measures should be immediately abolished. This debate will not bring much change because the opposition has brought no new idea forward.

This morning the whole cabinet held discussions with 15 groups from all areas across the country which came to sit with us. If that is not consultation, Mr. Speaker, if that is not listening besides what we have to listen to here in the House, what is consultation? I am asking. We are open to suggestions. We are willing to listen to realistic and objective propositions. That is what we did this morning once more when we listened to those organization representatives which presented their views. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that the government can count on the support of a great majority of Canadians, because the population also realizes what we are doing, what we have done, what we want to do in the future, in a few weeks and in a few months, is exactly adapted to the needs and desires of Canadians. That is what this government wants to do. That is also leading the way. Leadership, that is what this country needs and that is what this government, and particularly its leader, wants and shows, and will still show tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion the present debate and the vote that will be taken tonight will not accomplish much.

**Mr. La Salle:** What about the million people unemployed?

**Mr. Lessard:** The hon. member refers to a million people unemployed in this country—

● (2100)

[English]

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Who's fault is it? You did it.

**Mr. Neil:** Who caused it all?

[Translation]

**Mr. Lessard:** Precisely, Mr. Speaker, if we had not brought in those controls, we might have a greater number of unem-

[Mr. Lessard.]

ployed. Businesses want to invest. The cost is too high in this country. They prefer to invest elsewhere, and I know something about that. In my department we are faced with situations and propositions like that every day. Businesses say: it is better to invest in the United States. Labour, installation and construction costs are all too high in Canada. We are told that regularly.

That is where the controls applied last fall are important, that is where it is important to keep them on for a few months, Mr. Speaker, when there will be a consensus, when there will be agreement between governments, private businesses and groups representing workers. And that is the kind of consensus we need. Unless that consensus is there, Mr. Speaker, there is no point in putting an end to controls; quite the contrary, they will have to be further maintained for several years. I am not for that. I am against controls, but unless we can find a way to discipline ourselves as Canadians, as workers, as businesses, if we cannot control ourselves unfortunately someone will have to decide to control us, and that is the predicament we were in exactly 20 months ago, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we are now urging all members of the opposition to lay their short term political concerns aside. Indeed, that is not serving them very well. They would be better off to lay them aside because that does not help them. The polls prove it indeed.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. minister that his allotted time has expired.

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister accept a very short question?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** I am sorry. The minister's time has expired, and there is a previous ruling limiting speeches to 30 minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the comments of the Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard). Of course, he praised the good intentions of his government. However, I would like to correct one thing. He talked about the length of this debate. It does seem that the rules of this Parliament allow us to take four days but there was agreement to take three days for this debate and the government representative was in full agreement with that.

From the minister's point of view, this debate is a worthless exercise because his government has already declared its intention to abolish controls! We would like to give our confidence to the government, but thinking back about the 1974 elections and the commitments made by this government, you will understand, Mr. Speaker, that it is difficult to believe them when they say they will remove controls, when we remember how they condemned them in 1974 and the way they reversed their policy in 1975.

The minister is talking about negotiations, the series of consultations going on today. I wonder if it would not be normal to invite this government to ask themselves why these