

*Inquiries of the Ministry***INFORMATION**

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF REPORT

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, may I refer to a question asked me yesterday by the hon. member for Frontenac-Lennox and Addington in which he referred to a secret report of the task force on information. I answered that I knew of no such secret report. I do want to make it clear to the house that I told the house a couple of weeks ago there was a task force on information which had reported to me, and of course I am not denying the existence of that particular report. However, if the hon. member had something else in mind in terms of a secret report, I do not know of it.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Prime Minister arising out of his answer with respect to the task force on information. Is it the government's intention to make that report public in view of the importance of the subject matter?

Mr. Trudeau: We do intend to have parliament discuss this subject. Whether it will be by discussing the task force report or some other government decision has not yet been decided by the government.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

EFFORTS TO COMBAT RISING COST OF LIVING

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Having in mind the most recently announced increase in the cost of living index, is consideration being given to increasing the efforts of his department to combat this situation?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): We are always considering ways of making my effective department more effective.

Mr. Hees: Don't strain your wrist patting yourself on the back.

Mr. Basford: The government recently appointed the Prices and Incomes Commission which is now at work in Ottawa. I shall be meeting with them this afternoon, for example, to consider how their work can be carried out most effectively.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Now that the hon. gentleman's colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, has accepted a lower price for wheat on behalf of the

[Mr. Cadieux (Labelle).]

western farmer, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs see that this lower price is passed to the consumer by having the price of bread reduced?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

DRUGS

SALES TAX REMOVAL—PASSING ON OF BENEFIT TO CONSUMERS

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, this question is addressed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and it relates to the rise in the cost of living. In the light of the minister's reply to my question the other day, when he told the house that pharmaceutical prices fell only 5½ per cent after the 12 per cent sales tax was dropped, does he intend to institute an investigation to discover why the full sales tax reduction was not passed on to the consumer?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The progressive action taken by the government involved the removal of the sales tax at the manufacturers' level, and 11 per cent at the manufacturers' level is not 11 per cent at the retail level.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): In view of the seriousness of this question, would the minister consider bringing forward government order 91 which would at least have the effect of setting up the joint committee of this house and the other place on price stability, incomes and employment so that the committee could commence its work early in September?

Mr. Basford: I believe the President of the Privy Council dealt with that question the other day.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary to the question—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I take the liberty of reminding hon. members that we shall soon be running out of time. Many members did not have a chance to ask questions yesterday and perhaps we should try to give them an opportunity today.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the question asked—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We might return to this question after we have allowed other members an opportunity to take part.