

*Anti-Inflation Act*

I give him a certain credit for intelligence. I do not think he misunderstood the situation but was simply misleading the Canadian public through those years.

The Prime Minister was unavoidably driven into a corner after 1974 when we were experiencing at least nominal double-digit inflation. This is similar to the unemployment situation in that unemployment figures do not represent a true picture. There is always an underestimation in these matters. It is nonsense to talk about inflation at a rate of 8 per cent, 9 per cent or 9.5 per cent because this is just under the double-digit figure. If you ask people what they will sell their houses, property or farms for, whether they are ordinary working folk or those in the higher income brackets, you will find they want a return of 11.5 per cent or 12 per cent. That is what the public indicates as the degree of inflation.

It is ridiculous to ask the people of Canada to save and invest their funds. The Lord knows that we have had exhortations from "A" to "Z", and from midnight to midnight, 24 hours of the day, to save and to invest, providing we can stay ahead of the tax man. Why should people save to invest when they only get a return of 8 per cent or 9 per cent on Canada Savings Bonds at a time when inflation is 9.5 per cent or 10 per cent? They are not standing still, they are beginning to go backwards. How can we encourage people to save their money? Do not tell me this applies only to those people with incomes of over \$25,000 or \$30,000.

● (1612)

Every member of the House has had phone calls from old age pensioners who are on modest incomes, but not necessarily limited to what is paid under the old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. Some have perhaps saved a little on the side, maybe they are retired farmers and are getting something from the mortgage on their farms. They have had savings of one sort or another. They might be getting the Canada pension on top of old age pension, and in some provinces they live in residences for senior citizens which are highly subsidized by the provincial government out of the taxes from the general taxpayer, and to that extent they have an addition to the old age security provided by society. But even if they want to buy \$200 or \$300 worth of Canada Savings Bonds per year, and that is a very modest objective, how can you tell them that they are going to do anything worth while if, on the coupon rate of the Canada Savings Bonds, they will fall behind because inflation has gone up to 9.5 per cent or 10 per cent? There is no profit in trying to delude the public to that extent, and I think it is an act of deliberate dishonesty on the part of the government to engage in such tactics and to adopt such a laissez-faire attitude with regard to the economy as a whole.

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. To my mind there has been a very precise ruling by Mr. Speaker relating to the use of unparliamentary language. The hon. gentleman has used terms with regard to this government that, in my view, are completely unparliamentary, and I ask him very seriously to withdraw those remarks.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** I suggest to the Postmaster General (Mr. Blais) that the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has used them in regard to the government as a whole, not in regard to any individual.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, I wondered whether that was going to be the protest of the Postmaster General (Mr. Blais). From time to time he has been gently exposed to the rules of the House. May I suggest that he take a course in depth on the procedures of the House? I did not say the Postmaster General deliberately misled the House. My statement was that the government misled the public, and that has been perfectly acceptable since Anno Domini, in the same way that it is open to a backbencher on the government side to say that the opposition has misled the public. Of course, God forbid that they should say that because they have no occasion to do so. Be that as it may, I will take on the Postmaster General on a point of order at any time of day or night, and he better get up early in the morning.

When we see this government being honest with the public in so far as inflation is concerned, that will be the second coming of Christ. It has been dishonest with regard to inflation for almost a decade. I can go back to 1968 and 1969, long before the entry to the House of the majority of government backbenchers sitting here today, and I distinctly remember speeches made by the Prime Minister before he became Prime Minister, and subsequent to that time, as well as of the then ministers of the Crown, with regard to inflation. According to them we were doomsayers at the time, but at that time our dollar was worth about 50 per cent more than it is now. We have seen the savings of the Canadian public eroded to the point where they are now.

Some hon. members opposite were with me in Washington last week as members of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. We heard there a very good exposé of the U.S. economy. Our hosts, and I thank them publicly here, were most co-operative and went out of their way to be frank and to make themselves available at a most inopportune time for them on the eve of the president's message to Congress on the state of the nation and on the eve of the presentation of the U.S. budget. They were quite candid in their replies.

There are hon. members opposite who heard me make statements suggesting that unfortunately I thought the U.S. administration suffered from some of the problems that have faced our Canadian administration with regard to inflation, that they simply refused to bite the bullet and take the necessary steps. The same situation prevailed in this country until 1974 when wage and price controls were imposed. They should have been imposed long before that time and in a different form. The Prime Minister was upset. There was no way that he would consider a freeze and he made the comment "zap, you're frozen". That was his slogan in 1974, and it was said to the workers of Ontario. I am only sorry they did not have cotton wool in their ears at the time so they could have avoided hearing it. It was the worst thing he could possibly have said.