

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. On March 19 I put down question No. 1,661 which is of interest to all CNR employees who are making contributions to their pension fund. It is a very simple question. It asks what is the total amount of loans in each year, 1965 to 1972, made by the CNR Pension Fund to (a) Canadian companies and (b) foreign-controlled companies. It asks what amount has been loaned to Fidinam (Ontario) Limited and at what interest rate, and is Fidinam a Canadian-owned company. Finally, it asks whether railway workers have any voice in pension fund decisions that are made. There can be no reason why that question has not been answered except that the government does not want to give this information. The railway employees have asked over and over again for the information. I now ask the minister responsible for answering this question to provide an answer; otherwise I will have to take such action in this House as parliamentary procedure permits.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

#### WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX INCREASE—ACTION TO CONTROL RETAIL PRICE INCREASES—RATE OF INFLATION IN 1973

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance a question arising out of the news about the very alarming increase in the wholesale price index in April over March and, in particular, April 1973, compared with April, 1972. In view of the increase of over 16 per cent from year to year, does the minister still regard his anti-inflation program as adequate, or is he now prepared to take more direct action to de-escalate the increase in retail prices in Canada—and of course by “direct action” I do not mean tight money?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the wholesale price index gives us cause for concern. It represents primarily a rise in agricultural commodity and world commodity prices which would not be susceptible, since it involves a shortage of supply, to the type of action recommended by the Leader of the Opposition. As a matter of fact, when I made this analysis of the situation at last week's federal-provincial conference it was accepted by the provinces, and particularly by the Premier of Ontario.

**Mr. Stanfield:** In view of the fact that the increase in the wholesale price index is likely to work its way through quite quickly into the retail price index, and as the development of an inflationary psychology is one of the things that menaces us, did the minister in fact predict to that conference that the rate of inflation during 1973 would be 5 per cent? Further has he any reason to believe, or does he believe in fact, that the rate of inflation will level off and slow down?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, the rate of inflation in world commodities, including agricultural commodities, will level off when the supply is increased to meet the rapidly increasing demand. It is true that at the conference I said that our existing forecasts of the price

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deflator would run in the range of 5 per cent. As for an inflationary psychology, I suggest to the hon. gentleman that he may be contributing to that as much as anybody else.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the minister has suggested that, and it is not the first time I have suggested that he should do something to head it off.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### INFLATION—SUGGESTED BROADENING OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** I would like to ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question since, of course, his is the final responsibility. In light of these alarming figures, will the Prime Minister at least consider broadening the terms of the body established by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs? It is well recognized that I have no great fondness for that body, but I would like to know how the Prime Minister regards the problem of inflation, whether he believes the problem of inflation in Canada is largely one of food prices, and in light of these figures is he prepared to face up to what really seem to be the facts?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, there are many aspects to that question. Replying to the last part I would say yes, the government is always desirous of facing up to the facts. Indeed, the board to which the Leader of the Opposition refers is one which was set up along the lines recommended by a committee of the House.

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● (1450)

### ENERGY

#### PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—REQUEST THAT NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT BE AMENDED SO THAT PARLIAMENT MAY MAKE DECISION

**Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It concerns the minister's remarks over the past few weeks. They have raised widespread concern that the decision on the Mackenzie pipeline, a decision of extreme importance to the future of this country, will be made by the cabinet without prior consultation with parliament. When that concern was brought to the minister's attention, he observed that he was not in a position to do anything and he did not want members of parliament counselling him to break the law. We would not want to do that. Since the minister is of the view that the National Energy Board Act restricts him from bringing the matter of the construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline to parliament for debate, will he, instead, bring before parliament the National Energy Board Act so that the act can be suitably amended by parliament, to provide that the decision on the pipeline will be made by parliament rather than by the cabinet alone?