

Oral Questions

Act any person against whom an order has been made by the administrator has right of appeal, I want to ask the minister first of all if he is certain that the union in this case has no right of appeal? I would think under section 30 they have that right of appeal since they are adversely affected. If they have not, however, is the minister prepared by administrative order or the introduction of legislation to give those who are affected by the decision of the administrator, the right to appeal to the appeal tribunal?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is asking me for a legal opinion in the first instance. If it turns out that a person affected by a particular order does not have the right of further recourse, then of course every attention would be given to possible amendment in that regard.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the fact that this right of appeal which the government spoke of so glowingly when the legislation was going through the House, is increasingly becoming a farce since the person aggrieved cannot appeal to the administrator except with the consent of the Anti-Inflation Board or the government, and now cannot appeal the decision of the administrator to the appeal board and since they cannot take the matter to the federal courts unless they have been before the appeal tribunal, has the time not come for the minister to introduce legislation immediately to give any person who is affected by a decision of the Anti-Inflation Board the right to go directly to the appeal tribunal and, if not satisfied, to go directly to the courts?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied that the hon. gentleman's two presumptions are accurate and it therefore seems to me that his questions are premature.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, if I have not got the facts straight I would certainly be glad to be enlightened. The minister has not been good at that in the past. It may be that I am not very bright or it may be that the minister is trying to evade giving an answer. I want to ask the minister if he is prepared either to state the intent of the legislation or to clarify the legislation so that any employer or group of employees may have the right to take a decision of the Anti-Inflation Board to the appeal tribunal without being denied access to the administrator except by order of the Anti-Inflation Board or cabinet?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, he is not asking for a statement of the facts; he is asking for a legal interpretation of the law which has been passed by parliament. I would suggest to him that the law speaks for itself. It would be for the appropriate legal process to determine the application of it.

Mr. Baldwin: I agree with Dickens: "the law is a ass" in this case.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Why did you vote for it?

Mr. Baldwin: I did not vote for it.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**POSSIBILITY OF COMPLETING ORGANIZATION OF TWO OFFICES IN ROBerval CONSTITUENCY**

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and the President of the Treasury Board are absent, I shall direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister.

After the statement of the Treasury Board concerning the opening of two income tax offices in Arvida and Shawinigan, which represent total investments of more than \$15 million to accommodate some 1,300 civil servants for the Income Tax Branch, does not the minister think it would be more urgent to complete the organization of the two unemployment insurance offices in the constituency of Roberval promised since the beginning of the year to give justice to the unemployed, which would better comply with the anti-inflation legislation?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I will pass these suggestions along to the minister. Perhaps I should add this: the decentralization of the income tax office is part of the general policy with which I thought my hon. friend would agree.

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FOOD PRICES**STUDY INDICATING EXCESSIVE MARK-UPS—REQUEST FOR ACTION**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance and arises from the assurance he gave the House on November 7, as reported on page 8951 of *Hansard*, to the effect that the Anti-Inflation Board would be examining, "the gross profit margin" of companies and determining if there are unreasonable mark-ups in food prices. My question is prompted by the news today that a study commissioned by the Food Prices Review Board shows excessive mark-up in food prices ranging from 4 per cent in eastern Canada to 7 per cent in the west resulting from what the study calls lack of competition, and concentration. What does the minister propose to do about this situation which seems to be seriously undermining the government's entire anti-inflation program?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised several points. The Anti-Inflation Board, obviously, will pay close attention to the immediate impact of the matter, particularly in light of returns anticipated from a number of these companies by about the end of this month. The returns will be submitted for the purpose of determining their gross profit margins.

To affect, in the long run, competition not only in this area but, indeed, in all areas of Canadian business, the government will bring forward at an early date the second stage of the competition policy for the purpose of ensuring better competition for Canadian consumers in the Canadian market. I hope the hon. gentleman and his colleagues