

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ALLEGEDLY CONFLICTING VIEWS OF CABINET MINISTERS ON WHETHER WAGE SETTLEMENTS EXCESSIVE—POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A question for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether anyone has brought to his attention the fact that while he was away, the Minister of Labour, speaking in the House last week, referred to "the prevailing myth that wage settlements are running at double the average rise in wages in the United States" and stated they were eroding our competitive advantage over the Americans. Since this directly contradicts what the Prime Minister said at the first ministers' conference in April and is directly contrary to what the Minister of Finance has been saying I wonder if the right hon. gentleman has been able to restore a consensus with regard to this matter in his government since his return.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I have not been called upon to restore a consensus. I was under the impression, and I am sure it is a correct one, that both ministers are following the same policy. I will read the speech to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred and if there is anything I can add I will be pleased to do so.

Mr. Stanfield: If the Prime Minister thinks that both ministers are going in the same direction it is not much wonder the country is in trouble.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Is he prepared to state publicly in the House this afternoon his support for the position being taken by the Minister of Finance that current wage settlements threaten our competitive advantage over the Americans? Is the Prime Minister prepared to give his support to the position taken by the Minister of Finance or does he prefer to leave him dangling on a string?

Mr. Trudeau: I have said the same thing myself, so certainly I support the Minister of Finance. I am sure the Minister of Labour also supports him.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

An hon. Member: Why don't you read the speech?

Mr. Trudeau: If there are some doubts over there, why not ask the minister concerned—I am sure he supports the Minister of Finance. There may be some disagreement regarding statistics and that often happens, but the policy of the government on financial matters is as stated by the Minister of Finance.

Privilege—Mr. Diefenbaker

● (1500)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. FIRTH—ORAL QUESTION ASKED LAST FRIDAY, MAY 30

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have notice of some questions of privilege to deal with. I have notice, first, of what ought to be a brief question of privilege by the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth.)

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege concerning my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) last Friday, as reported in *Hansard* at page 6276.

During the preamble to my second question I mentioned that certain models of television sets had been banned by the department because they were hazardous. Specifically, I mentioned the brand name Sony. Upon review of the matter I found that I was in error and that Sony products were not placed in the hazardous category. I would like at this time to apologize to the makers of Sony for suggesting they were marketing inferior products, and to the House for placing misleading information on the record.

There was a brand of television set available in northern stores long after it had been banned by the department. However, I will not confuse the issue further by mentioning the name.

MR. DIEFENBAKER—SPEECH OF PRIME MINISTER ON PRIVY COUNCIL ESTIMATES

Mr. Speaker: I have notice of two other questions of privilege. On May 27 the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) indicated, by way of certain preliminary remarks, his intention to raise a question of privilege and then to conclude his remarks and put whatever motion might be attached thereto at the first opportunity upon which the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was in the House. In addition, I have received further notice from the right hon. member for Prince Albert indicating his intention to do this today.

I have also received notice of a question of privilege from the right hon. Prime Minister concerning those remarks by the right hon. member for Prince Albert. I do not anticipate an easy time sorting out the results of the remarks. Indeed, my difficulty is beginning already in regard to whom I should call on first. However, since the right hon. member for Prince Albert is in the course of his remarks and has indicated that he will continue and conclude them to the point of putting a motion, I think for the sake of neatness, although it is an exception not to call upon the Prime Minister, I should call upon the right hon. member for Prince Albert. As I say, his remarks were commenced at an earlier date and it is appropriate to conclude them and to move whatever motion the right hon. member might want on the record. Then, in turn, I will recognize the Prime Minister. However, I am open to discussion about the order of priority.

Mr. Hees: Seconds out of the ring. Hold on to your hats!