

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 26, 1975

The House met at 2 p.m.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER MEETINGS SEEKING CONSENSUS ON RESTRAINT—DATE OF FINAL ASSESSMENT STAGE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance arising from the reported statement of the Prime Minister during his tour of Ontario that no further consensus talks are scheduled between the ministry and the groups involved in the earlier discussions. Would the minister indicate to the House why this is so, particularly now that the budget has been delayed almost a month beyond what he had originally hoped?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I suppose it is true that in a formal sense there will be no further talks until after the budget, in view of the fact that we now have to review options, but there have been technical discussions held since my last meetings, and as I said to some members of the press, it may be that I will want to have further meetings with some leaders of the business and labour communities.

Mr. Stanfield: It rather looks as though the consensus program is in the same condition as some of the animals delivered for human consumption in Quebec.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Without any such talks between the minister and the groups he had been meeting before, could the minister tell us what other input he will be seeking before making his final assessment on the prospect of a voluntary restraint program? When will the minister enter his final assessment stage, and will he make a final assessment before the budget?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I think that might be one of the matters I will want to deal with on budget night.

Mr. Stanfield: Speaking about budget night, in view of the delays, confusion and deception, which I hope has not been intentional, I must ask the minister whether he is prepared to stake his continuance in his present office on his ability to present a budget no later than June 23.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, there are enough risks in this office already.

● (1410)

INFLATION—DATE OF DELIVERY OF WORKING PAPERS ON RESTRAINT GUIDELINES SUBMITTED TO CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Notwithstanding the minister's desire to remain silent about future developments—or the lack of them—in the consensus program, would he at least clarify a few points about what has been done up to this time. In view of the fact that Mr. Joe Morris of the Canadian Labour Congress has stated publicly that the first time he saw the federal government working paper on consensus was when he read it in the May 5 edition of the *Toronto Star*, could the minister tell the House when a copy of the working paper, as now tabled in the House, was delivered to the CLC and to Mr. Morris?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think they were delivered to the CLC before the documents were made public, and certainly before the executive meeting of the Canadian Labour Congress and the meeting of the council of the Canadian Labour Congress. I believe Mr. Morris had not had a chance to review the paper personally because he had been out of the country on official business.

INFLATION—SOURCE OF LEAK OF WORKING PAPER ON RESTRAINT GUIDELINES

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As the leak of the consensus paper apparently contributed to the hardening of positions and an atmosphere of confrontation, judging from the comments made by Mr. Morris, can the minister tell the House whether he has investigated where the leak occurred? If it occurred in his department what remedial action has been taken?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): We have not found the source, Mr. Speaker.

INFLATION—POSSIBILITY OF MINISTER MEETING CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS TO DISCUSS COUNTER PROPOSALS TO RESTRAINT PROGRAM

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): A final supplementary. Considering that the minister, as of May 23 had not met with Mr. Morris to discuss the CLC nine point counter proposal, can the minister indicate whether or not he is prepared to meet with Mr. Morris to at least discuss the CLC proposals?