

Cost of Living

Ontario producers are to receive the same offer, and has a deal been made with the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board?

Mr. Speaker: I will make my ruling that this is not a point of order and call orders of the day.

Mr. Hellyer: The minister said "yes". He nodded his head.

Mr. Bell: Let the record show that the minister said "yes".

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58(9)—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—
ALLEGED FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT
MEASURES TO COMBAT INCREASED COST OF LIVING

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House has no confidence in the adequacy of government measures to deal with the cost of living as such measures were announced to the House by the Prime Minister on September 4th, 1973.

He said: Mr. Speaker, within minutes of notice of this motion being presented on Friday, we all learned that today was not destined to be an exactly suspenseful day because of the Leader of the NDP indicated his party would continue to support the government.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Stanfield: Notwithstanding the non-shock of that information, I trust that our motion will provoke a stimulating day, and I am confident that such continued enlightenment will lead us shortly either to renewed suspense or the necessity of a formal coalition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am anxious to hear the comments the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) will make later in the day. If he is logical and maintains his most recent attitude, he could easily support our motion. Naturally, I do not expect him to do so but, in default of being enlightened, we may perhaps be amused by new acrobatic feats, turn-about, contorsions and pirouettes.

Just over a month ago, the minister called the press to explain that he had erred once again, this time in predicting the amount of tax income and, consequently, the deficit. The good news, on that occasion, was that, thanks to his errors in calculations, he would have less to borrow to make up the deficit and, as a result, this would have a salutary effect on rates of interest and inflation. In addition, he informed the press that he had asked his colleagues to put a brake on their departmental expenditures, that being the best way of fighting inflation. The impres-

[Mr. McKinley.]

sion was, Mr. Speaker, that his colleagues would treat his recommendation exactly as they have his previous ones.

[*English*]

The minister maintained his average of being partly right and mostly wrong most of the time.

● (1500)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Then, he left for what I am sure was a well-deserved rest and recuperation shortly after, leaving behind him a deficit reduced by some \$500 million in expenditures as a result of increased tax revenues and leaving the government in what he called "the right posture", which was that of exercising restraint in government expenditures. Alas, the minister hardly had time to get out of his clothes and into his bathing suit when his policy became unstuck. As a result of an unrelenting and highly visible increase in consumer prices, and as a result of highly vocal public protest, the minister's colleagues in Ottawa abandoned the minister's posture and rejected his advice. From then until now, the duties and responsibilities of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) seemingly have passed from his hands to those of his master economist, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). We all recall how he conquered inflation for one day only a few years ago.

Of course, in tandem with the Prime Minister is that father of organic union, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang). It is doubtful that the advice and the person of the Minister of Finance would have been abandoned were it not for the fact that it was becoming very clear that parliament would have to be summoned to resolve still another crisis of mismanagement. Otherwise, there would have been no hurry. But because of the rail strike and the need to call parliament, there was not only the need to do something, there was a need to do something in a hurry. As a result we got that makeshift, hodgepodge of measures proclaimed by the Prime Minister last Tuesday.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The subsidy on wheat for domestic milling, having been reduced in July, was raised by the Prime Minister and I understand has been changed several times since then. Increases in family allowances promised for the future were brought into effect rather quickly and the quarterly adjustments to old age pensions, which were said to be impossible to implement by the minister concerned, were in fact brought into effect. Never mind that the measure with respect to wheat and bread prices would, it was said less than a month ago, create a frenzy of speculation and fluctuation in grain markets.

The prize-winning reversal by the Prime Minister last Tuesday was the announced intention to carry western crude into Montreal through western pipelines extended from Toronto. What this government had determined not to do, that is not to build that pipeline,—on Tuesday they determined to do—perhaps. But, it would be a very foolish man who would invest in any decision by this government in the belief that such a decision would last.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!