

Inquiries of the Ministry

year during the three months period, a very important part of the year, and has been steadily increasing month by month for the past three months? What is he going to do about it? Is he going to continue doing nothing?

Mr. Benson: All I can do is to say that my hon. friend is wrong again.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that this will be a supplementary question. The second question asked by the hon. gentleman was substantially the same as his first question. Certainly he has a right to ask a supplementary and will be recognized for that purpose.

Mr. Hees: My supplementary question is on behalf of the Canadian people. Are the minister and the government going to do something to try to check inflation, or does the minister, like the Prime Minister, consider that it has been licked.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Minister of Finance very seriously—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: I think it is important that we know, Mr. Speaker. Is it the view of the Minister of Finance that inflation is licked?

Mr. Benson: It is nice to have a serious question from the opposite side. I do not think that inflation can ever be assumed to be licked.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ALLEGED CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR PRICE AND WAGE CONTROLS—OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. It has now become public knowledge that the government has a contingency plan for price and wage controls. Can the Acting Prime Minister indicate whether the nature of this plan will be made public and also if in fact it has been made known to the provinces so that proper discussion can take place at that level?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I do not know what the authority is for my hon. friend's preamble to the question. We have of course been studying the question of price and wage controls if those should become necessary. The implication of the question is that we have a cut and dried plan for this purpose. This is not so. There are various alternatives that could be employed if the circumstances arose.

Mr. Baldwin: A new government would help.

Mr. Lundrigan: Perhaps I might have prefaced my question by saying that the Prime Minister made this

[Mr. Hees.]

public last evening on the national television network. The Acting Prime Minister might be looking for a job when his boss returns from Moscow.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should not make a statement before asking his supplementary; he should ask the supplementary question.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, you have got to inform these ministers. May I ask if the contingency plan which was made public knowledge last evening by the Prime Minister will be sprung on the country like the War Measures Act, or will some means of consultation be brought about so we can talk about the plan?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

INFLATION—PRICES' FORECAST FOR 1971

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance perhaps an even more serious question. To follow the line that we have been following, I wish to ask him whether he or his advisers have made the kind of study that would give them a notion of the forecast of the likely curve of prices in Canada for the remainder of 1971? Can he inform the House what they anticipate happening, from all the evidence they have now, in the next six or seven months?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will be doing exactly that in my budget.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ASSISTANCE TO EAST PAKISTAN REFUGEES NOW IN INDIA

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. In light of reports that a million and a half refugees have crossed from East Pakistan into West Bengal and India, and that the number of such refugees is estimated as likely to rise to five million, and in view of the impossibility of the government of India coping with this influx, has the government of Canada communicated or, if not, will it communicate at once with the government of India and offer relief in the form of cash, relief materials and urgently needed transport facilities, to be administered by the Indian government or by such agencies as the International Red Cross or Oxfam of Canada so that this immense tragedy can be alleviated?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have been in touch with the Indian government. Indeed, this morning I received the High Commissioner of India, who once again brought to our attention the great tragedy that has taken place in that subcontinent. I indicated to him, as I have to the House, that the Canadian government is prepared to offer assistance in the care of these refugees.