

Oral Questions

● (1500)

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order brought about because of my difficulty in getting an answer from the government. Although realizing that the question is not one which they are required to answer, I have attempted, through writing and otherwise, to find out if there is anybody on the government side of the House with a sufficient sense of fairness to look at the document presented to the courts by Tom Kent, President of the Cape Breton Development Corporation, which has since been denied. Is there anyone who will stand up and defend it, or at least give justice to the men whom Tom Kent is now cheating because of a false document?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, on a further point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would hope that we could get on with the business of the House which is to be called. The hon. member rises on a second point of order. I will try to recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre eventually on his own point of order.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, since the members on the government benches have had the opportunity to defend the action of Tom Kent, and since not one of them has accepted that invitation, do you not think that somebody on that side, especially the Prime Minister, out of a sense of fairness would fix up this situation and not allow Tom Kent to deceive either the courts or parliament?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to another matter. Earlier this afternoon Your Honour ruled that a statement which the Minister of Transport sought to table under Standing Order 41(2) was not one that could be tabled in that way but that it appeared to Your Honour to be a statement which the minister could have made on motions. That being the case, I wonder if Your Honour would ascertain whether there is now unanimous consent for the House to revert to motions, so that the minister can make that statement here, in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that his interpretation of the ruling of the Chair differs slightly from my interpretation of what I said. As the hon. member seeks the unanimous consent of the House to revert to motions, I will inquire whether there is that unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

Mr. Speaker: Obviously, there is not unanimous consent. Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FAMILY ALLOWANCES ACT AND YOUTH ALLOWANCES ACT

AMENDMENTS TO INCREASE PAYMENTS

The House resumed, from Friday, September 7, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lalonde that Bill C-223, to amend the Family Allowances Act and the Youth Allowances Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I note that my eloquence is moving members, even before I have begun to speak.

Mr. Nowlan: You have not seen anything yet.

Mr. Macquarrie: As my colleague from Annapolis Valley has just said, I have not seen anything yet.

This is the last of the trilogy of anti-inflation measures or, as the minister put it on Friday, it "is within the scope of the program which the government has already announced to protect the purchasing power of Canadian consumers." The minister on Friday made references to the bill of his colleague, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) and the amendment to the Old Age Security Act with which this chamber has already dealt. He also referred to pending changes in the Canada Pension Plan. We are thus completing our examination of what one might describe as the prime ministerial welfare package for this country.

Last week the House adjourned for two hours to allow for this magisterial declamation against inflation and rising living costs, of which there has been some discussion in recent days. But it is misleading, I believe, to the public of this country to suggest that on this question of social welfare, what was announced by the Prime Minister last week conveys, implies or inscribes any dynamic, compelling urgency as a motivation for the announcement which was made in this particular welfare field. So, we have here not a series of bold, new thrusts but a rediscovery of items which have been mouldering on the order paper for a good many months.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made references to changes in the Canada Pension Plan. Was this a new and special response to the vaulting cost of living increases throughout the summer months and, indeed throughout the year, that is, through the fall, winter and spring? Canada now, as has been documented in this chamber, has the most rapid escalation of food prices of seven major countries, an escalation which is up to 14.7 per cent per annum, as documented by one of the most prestigious