

Canadian Economy

two thirds, declared themselves to be in favour of the federal prices and incomes program. The degree of support, of course, varies from region to region. Three out of four Canadians in British Columbia and the four Atlantic provinces favour the government's approach; the other regions were less enthusiastic in their support. But the survey shows on a national basis that, of those Canadians who expressed an opinion on the program, two out of every three favoured the government's attack on rising living costs.

The survey also revealed some interesting reactions regarding the public's perception of the single most important factor that has contributed to inflation in Canada. For example, 28 per cent of those surveyed felt that wage demands were the most important factor behind inflation; 24 per cent said that world wide economic conditions, including rising energy costs, were a major reason. Some 13 per cent felt inflation was due to expenditure by various levels of government, and only 10 per cent felt that profits were responsible.

Some rather interesting contrasts were provided in response to a series of questions having to do with expectations for the program. For example, 84 per cent of all Canadians agree that, to quote the question, "for the sake of the country as a whole, all Canadians should try to make the government's wage and price controls work". An even greater number, 86 per cent, said that they would personally accept controls and try to make them work. At the same time a lesser number, about one half, or 47 per cent, said they thought not enough Canadians would support the controls to make them work. I think those are revealing statistics indicating that while there is a great will on the part of a substantial number of Canadians to accept controls there is the feeling that their neighbours, others in the community, will not co-operate. Indeed it was because of the feelings that were revealed that my colleagues, after the course of the consensus operation last spring, came forward with this particular program.

Mr. Stanfield: So that is the reason, is it?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The poll showing 61 per cent in favour of the program is matched by the Gallup poll, which found 62 per cent in support. The French network survey conducted with *La Presse* found 56 per cent support. I hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) laughing. I suppose one can only expect at this point in time that when he changes his position to being against controls the majority of Canadians will be in favour of them.

One of the interesting questions has been the extent to which the controls might be extended under the provisions of Bill C-73 which has passed the House. There have been extensive representations during the period of time that the white paper and the bill were before the public indicating that particular groups in the economy should, for reasons of strategic importance, be included within the controls program. The government's concern has been that the controls should be selective, that they should not be the kind of comprehensive controls on all aspects of the econo-

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

my that have been proposed by others. It is our concern that these controls should be selective in an attempt to control the principal sectors which, without that kind of control, could have the most adverse effect on the community.

● (2040)

We would conclude, however, that the governor in council should under Bill C-73, upon receiving Royal Assent, direct the Anti-Inflation Board to consider the situation in the following industries: the trucking industry; the construction industry, and here we are considering, of course, firms with less than 20 employees; the shipping industry on the west coast of Canada, the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence; the longshoring industry; and the grain handling industry, with a view to recommending whether, in what manner, and to what extent designations should be made under 12(2) of Bill C-73 so as, for example, to cover present collective bargaining in these particular industries.

If the Anti-Inflation Board makes a positive recommendation in respect of any or all of the foregoing industries, and if the governor in council decides to designate some or all of these industries, the designation will take effect as of today and the designation will be applicable to both prices and compensation.

We are now engaged in this anti-inflation program, having moved to the end of the first phase, namely, seeking parliamentary support, and I would hope the bill will receive the support of the Senate within a matter of some days, and then we can have Royal Assent. At that point we will be able to move into the stage at which the Anti-Inflation Board and the administrator would be able to carry out the wishes of parliament as indicated in the bill.

I think we can at this time take some lessons from the reaction shown by the polls, namely, that there is a very substantial degree of support for this kind of program from the Canadian people. With the mobilization of this kind of support I think it is important not just for the government but, indeed, for all parties to lend their support in this effort to overcome inflation in Canada.

There may, indeed, be criticism of individual parts of the program, and there may, indeed, be criticism of the manner in which either the government or those appointed under the program may carry it out, but I think the ultimate truth, which I hope all will accept, is that none of us in this House or in the country stands to gain by continuing inflation. It is in that spirit that I hope we can arrive at an early reduction in the rate of inflation in Canada, and arrive at that point, which indeed I am sure is hoped for by all quarters in the House, where it ceases to be one of the major economic problems disturbing us in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) who took advantage of the opportunity he had tonight to reiterate all the hopes he puts in his anti-inflation bill. I for one wish that these hopes have lasted since the government presented its bill a month ago. However, I am sure they will disappear, alas too soon, whereas inflation will continue to increase.