

normal in times like this that Canadians should exercise a measure of restraint.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister could answer the direct question that I asked. There is some concern that in 1979 there will be reimplementation of the controls program that will specifically control wages. Because of the gap in the increase in wages compared to the increase in the cost of living, can the Prime Minister assure us there will be no implementation of wage controls until workers at least catch up to the increased cost of living?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in his previous question the hon. member referred to something I said at the first ministers' conference. I ask him to refer to that text where I was enjoining Canadians generally, and all governments in particular, to take certain measures to prevent inflation from again reaching a crisis state. I said if we ever reached a crisis state, there might be a need for controls.

We have not reached that state, and I do not anticipate our reaching it. I repeat, the labour movement and governments have shown a commendable measure of restraint. I am convinced, because of that, there will be no crisis situation. If there is no crisis situation, the government not only will not introduce controls, but cannot under the Supreme Court ruling.

Mr. Nystrom: The Prime Minister said he is more concerned about people on low incomes, rather than subsidizing a specific product such as bread. We in this House have increased old age pensions and family allowances for low income people, and provinces like Ontario are increasing welfare payments.

The unemployment insurance bill before the House will cut back by 10 per cent the benefits paid to some of the lowest income people in this country. Considering the statement the Prime Minister made a few minutes ago, will he have the government reconsider its position and withdraw that bill which will hurt very many low income people in this country?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is obviously participating in the debate which is now before the House. The hon. member knows the government's arguments. It was a Liberal government that was the author of the Unemployment Insurance Act. History has shown that we have placed a very high priority on that particular act. The hon. member knows it is important for governments to review and to make sure that their measures are not abused, and that is the nature of the measure put before the House.

● (1427)

[Translation]

Oral Questions

REFERENDA

GOVERNMENT POSITION IF BILL C-9 PASSED

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put my question to the Prime Minister. At a fund-raising dinner held in Toronto for the party in power, the Prime Minister is supposed to have said, according to newspaper reports, with regard to Bill C-9 concerning a public referendum in Canada, that if the bill is passed it would be used to cancel a Quebec majority vote in favour of separation from the rest of Canada. Could the Prime Minister tell us what he meant when he made that statement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Well, Mr. Speaker, this is another example of a bill under consideration in the House for, I believe, only one day. If the hon. member did not take part in the debate or heard it he could read *Hansard* to learn what is the government's position. I stated, when I first spoke about the bill in the House a year and a half ago, that the Quebec government had decided to consult the people through a referendum and that the federal government is entitled to the same right.

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question. The Prime Minister said in the same speech that if Bill C-9 is passed, it would perhaps allow the federal government to hold a referendum before Quebec to see whether the majority of Canadians will take the provincial referendum into account. Could the Prime Minister tell us exactly what was the meaning of that statement?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I will have to check because I am convinced that I did not say such things in Toronto, but if the member wants to send me the quotation, I will look into it.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF SPORT FOR CUBA

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before continuing the question period, may I invite hon. members to join with me in recognizing the presence in our gallery of a distinguished visitor on an official visit to our country, the Minister of Sport for the People's Republic of Cuba, Jorge Garcia-Bongo.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!