

Anti-Inflation Act

in the operation of the information centre. What is the situation with regard to the Economic Council of Canada and the Canada Labour Relations Council? I ask my question because I cannot read everything, and would like the minister to help me. Are these organizations to return to the fold, as it were, particularly since we were flirting with them, so to speak, with \$10 million? Can the minister elaborate on the point? I think the organizations involved—and if I am wrong perhaps the minister will correct me—are the Canada Labour Relations Council and the Economic Council of Canada, on both of which labour had representation?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I think I should deal with the implied derisive comment of the hon. member for Hamilton West with respect to the \$10 million.

Mr. Alexander: I did not mean it that way.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): It shows, I think, a dismal lack of appreciation of what has gone wrong in the past in our collective bargaining process. It is far too deeply committed to the adversary approach, to a degree not duplicated in any other industrialized nation of the free world. As many far-seeing members of this House perceive, we must depolarize the situation and try to bring the parties together. They must realize that a well functioning economy is in their own interest, that everyone has a stake in profits and progress. That is what we are endeavouring to do. When we talk about grants to labour organizations to get on with the educational process that is so badly needed in that area, we are only dealing equally with them as we are with the business community.

● (1750)

Perhaps the hon. member for Hamilton West is not aware that the business community can deduct from taxes paid the expense of sending officials of the corporation, businessmen, to seminars and educational courses of all kinds. If you deduct that, it is revenue the government does not receive. Therefore these grants are made to labour organizations so that they can undertake the same process.

If labour can avail themselves of the educational institutions, and many have built careers in the business community through those institutions for which the taxpayer pays, it will make the system work better. The educational system must serve all Canadians. We must work together to achieve the objectives we are desirous of achieving. If they can be achieved, it will be the best \$10 million this government has ever spent. I hope it will have the support of the hon. member for Hamilton West.

Mr. Alexander: Now that you have spanked me, will you answer my questions?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): As the hon. member is well aware, the attitude of labour at the moment is that they have adopted a position of opposition to wage and price controls. That has been evident for some time. It must even be evident to the hon. member for Hamilton West. They have been meeting more with government over the last year, as well as

with the business community, than in any similar period since Confederation. Obviously discussions are going on. Through that process there is a greater awareness of what the difficulties are on all sides with respect to achieving the purpose of a healthy economy.

Labour's position is that, if we can reach some consensus with respect to the decontrol period, they are willing to participate in mechanisms of various kinds during the decontrol period that ensues thereafter.

Mr. Alexander: But they are not ready yet.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): They indicated a willingness, certainly on the 14 points. We discussed many of those with labour and the business community. We received positive responses to many of the initiatives. Much of the seeking of consensus has been going on unofficially rather than officially through some of the bodies the hon. member has identified. Surely the hon. member's mind is not so inflexible as to think that the only way to achieve consensus is to have somebody with a proper name that calls meetings. One way to achieve consensus and co-operation is to meet the other fellow, talk about common problems, and work out solutions. That is what we have been doing, and probably more so in the last year than ever before.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I think it can be agreed by both sides that this debate has been carried out at a higher level than is often the case with debates in this House. Today we have been fortunate to have two Privy Councillors of Her Majesty's government, one an ex-member of cabinet, address themselves to this issue. I recognize the fact that the debate on what the issues are has been made clear as to the timing of decontrol.

Of all the speeches made today, the most significant one was the speech by the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard) who is not a Privy Councillor. The hon. member for Rimouski put the debate at the level it should be.

First, this program of price and wage controls is inflationary. It legislates inflation. Just quoting figures of 10 per cent, 8 per cent, 6 per cent or 4 per cent begs the question. This is inflationary legislation that is having disastrous effects now on the people of Canada.

The hon. member for Rimouski talked about how this is affecting the farmers in Quebec, the small businessmen, and those who are not protected by having big companies to do the bargaining for them in this inflationary period. They are not protected by the unions. As a result, he said, many farmers have to leave the business. I am going to put it very simply.

The hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), also a Privy Councillor, spoke in this debate. He put his finger on what he thought was the issue, that the country had lost belief in the credibility of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). When a man of the decency of the hon. member for Halifax stands up and says that he too has lost belief in the credibility of the Prime Minister, that should make sense to the people of Canada.