

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe I made an announcement a couple of weeks ago which may have escaped the hon. member. It was to the effect that the commission itself would be wound up upon termination of its mandate, at the end of June, but that a small task force would continue in order to finish whatever was in the works in terms of preparing for publication some studies and background work, and that they would also stay around to keep active any contingency plan for fighting inflation.

Mr. Hees: Is the Bank of Canada concerned lest our old age pensioners spend all of their \$2.88 raise at one time and thereby start a new wave of inflation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: —and does not this pittance of a raise make “Six Buck Harris” look like Santa Claus?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that a question asked in those terms is not in order and I suggest it should not be answered. If the hon. member wished to redraft the question he will be allowed to do so, but I believe at this point—

[Translation]

—it might be advisable to allow a supplementary to the preceding question. I believe that the hon. member for Sainte-Marie has a supplementary.

* * *

PENSIONS**OLD AGE SECURITY—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES
RESPECTING INCREASE**

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question which is supplementary to the previous one on social legislation.

I would like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister to say before this House whether the provinces were consulted or advised about the measures or amendments to the Old Age Security Act that the federal government wanted to introduce before the Minister of Finance made his budget presentation.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member means the amendments relating to old age pensions, etc. being considered now, the answer is obviously no because the provinces are not consulted before the presentation of a federal budget.

[English]

OLD AGE SECURITY—DISCUSSION WITH QUEBEC

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister or the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I should like to ask whether the discussions that have taken place with the government of the province of Quebec regarding family allowances and social welfare matters generally included discussions about old age security and whether the minister concerned, who has expressed dis-

[Mr. Hees.]

appointment, envisaged there would be some global policy developed between the two governments regarding this field of security?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can only say that at the time of the Victoria conference we were prepared to go much farther. We were prepared to envisage a constitutional amendment which would have made such consultation mandatory. However, the province of Quebec did not see fit to accept that amendment at the time. Consequently it is natural that we want to continue to exercise our constitutional right of increasing pensions and payments which are under the federal jurisdiction, and that we should do so without consultation when they were going to be presented in a budget seems rather obvious, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Sainte-Marie on a further supplementary, but hon. members will note that we have many potential questioners today. Yesterday we ran short of time and I undertook to try to recognize those members today who were not seen yesterday. I would ask for the co-operation of members immediately to limit the number of supplementaries. Of course, I have to rely entirely on the co-operation of hon. members in this regard.

• (1450)

[Translation]

**OLD AGE SECURITY—QUEBEC SOCIAL SECURITY
PROGRAM—FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister.

Since the federal government knew that the province of Quebec intended to introduce an integrated welfare plan and since other provinces were not previously consulted, does that position on the part of the federal government mean that it intends to oppose the Quebec government's intention to introduce an integrated welfare plan?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. As I have just said to the Leader of the Opposition, the federal government was ready to commit itself by a constitutional amendment to some consultations in the area mentioned by the hon. member as well as in many others.

We made that proposal at the Victoria Conference. The province of Quebec itself refused to see a constitutional amendment in the resolution we were ready to approve and, as I said to the Leader of the Opposition, until the Constitution is amended, all provinces must expect the federal government to continue to exercise its jurisdiction in that field.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Greenwood.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Charlevoix has a supplementary in this connection. I shall recognize him in a moment.