

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I think an appropriate time will be when I bring down a budget, which I intend to bring down as early as I can, hopefully before the end of May. Before I can come to a final decision on the nature of the budget, I will have to weigh certain key factors which it has not yet been possible to assess with the precision I would like. It is easy to outline the factors to the House. In brief order, they are as follows: First, the continuing character and extent of the mix of American tax and energy policy; second, the developments as they may be agreed upon in some form or another by the Prime Minister and first ministers at this week's conference relating to pricing for oil and gas; third, the effect we may be able to have on prices and incomes in Canada by working together in a common effort to moderate the claims of the various groups in the economy.

I might say as well that I will be making a further assessment of the international situation as it relates to the oil exporting countries. On my trip to the Middle East I shall be calling upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom and the Minister of Finance of France. With this information, and with these assessments, I hope to be back before the House with a precise estimate, as we have it at that time in forecasting terms, of the growth—

● (1410)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: Don't forget Celsius!

INFLATION—DATE WHEN PRECISE INFORMATION AVAILABLE
ON NATURE OF CONSENSUS ON RESTRAINT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): With regard to the consensus. Since the minister is bringing out a budget before the end of May, and since the consensus will be one of the factors involved, will he undertake to give us precise information as to the nature of this consensus when he brings down a budget or will this continue to be a secret even after the budget secrets have all been disclosed?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): I will have to deal with that consensus in one form or another in the budget statement, as the hon. gentleman has surmised, but I hope to be able, through my parliamentary secretary, to table in the House a statement or progress report to the country, to the first ministers and to the Prime Minister during the forthcoming conference.

INQUIRY WHETHER BUDGET WILL BE DESIGNED TO
COUNTERACT INFLATION OR DEAL WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is directed to the Minister of Finance. Since the hon. gentleman will now be introducing a budget before the end of May, and in view of the fact that seasonally adjusted employment is down by 19,000 since November and there has been virtually no increase in employment since August, while unemployment—

Some hon. Members: Question!

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Mr. Stevens:—seasonally adjusted has jumped 190,000 since August, will the minister indicate whether his budget will be designed to stimulate the economy so as to arrest this unsatisfactory unemployment situation or will it be more designed to counteract the inflation which is still prevalent?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Obviously the budget will have to deal with both those problems. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby is showing disarming perception.

An hon. Member: Unusual!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I might say in response to the preamble to the question asked by the hon. member for York-Simcoe that the year over year increase in employment in March in Canada was up by 2.5 per cent and that the year over year increase in the labour force in March on an unadjusted basis of 4.9 per cent was 450,000. So his figures are completely off the mark.

REASON FOR DELAY IN SETTING WAGE GUIDELINES

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Further to my original question I should like to put a supplementary to the Minister of Finance. With time lost due to work stoppages in January up 64 per cent as compared with January of last year when Canada had one of the worst strike records in the industrialized world, would the minister tell us why it is only after May that he seriously intends to set guidelines for future wage settlements, bearing in mind that 1975 is a very heavy bargaining year during which just under three-quarters of all employees covered by major union contracts will be negotiating?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): I will deal with that statement at the appropriate time.

Mr. Stevens: A final supplementary. Surely, we get a little tired of always this evasion that statements will be made at an appropriate time.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

UNEMPLOYMENT—POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO
CREATE MORE JOBS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I should like to address a further question to the highly disarming Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that unemployment in percentage terms now exceeds even the high level of unemployment which was achieved during the application of the government's deflationary program between 1969 and 1971, can the minister inform the House whether, between now and the date upon which he proposes to bring in a budget, the government has any plans to initiate action which will lead to more jobs in the economy?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the budget being the relevant parliamentary response in fiscal and monetary terms to the problems of