

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the proposed motion. This motion also requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The motion cannot be put.

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SOCIAL SECURITY**OLD AGE PENSIONS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 with a motion which I dare to hope the House will accept. Now that Royal Assent has been given to Bill C-147, the new \$100 basic rate of the old age security pension is in effect. However, in view of rising prices there is urgent and pressing necessity that something further be done during this session to improve the position of our senior citizens. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas):

That this House indicates to the government that it would welcome, during this session, a further bill to amend the Old Age Security Act, the purpose of which would be to provide an additional increase in the basic amount of the pension paid thereunder and to lower the eligible age.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the proposed motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The motion cannot be put.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****CONSUMER PRICE INDEX INCREASE—POSSIBILITY OF PRICE FREEZE OR OTHER MEASURES TO COMBAT INFLATION**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. It arises out of the figures released today showing a continuing increase in the consumer price index. Is the government now prepared to adopt a comprehensive approach and attack on inflation in Canada, such as our recommendation of a price freeze, in view of the continuing increase and the evident failure of the budgetary measures to halt this increase and in view of the growing

[Mr. Broadbent.]

expectation of a continuing high rate of inflation this year?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it may be that the hon. gentleman is adding to that expectation. However, I say to him that the basis of the rise again this month is primarily food. It is true that the rise in food prices is disturbing to the House and to every Canadian. As I said earlier, it is primarily a supply problem. It is primarily a reflection of world commodity prices in grains, meat, sugar, coffee and so on. The hon. gentleman referred to the budgetary measures. Looking over the index I note that, except for food, the rise was less than the average in recent years, largely attributable to the removal of the sales tax on children's clothing and children's footwear.

• (1140)

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I do not intend to refrain from making suggestions or discussing public problems because of threats from the Minister of Finance or anyone else.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX INCREASE—MONITORING DEVICES TO ASSURE TARIFF CUTS AND SALES TAX REDUCTIONS PASSED ON IN LOWER PRICES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs what monitoring devices of a concrete nature have been established to assure that the tariff cuts and sales tax reductions that were made have in fact been translated into lower prices?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): As I said in the House earlier, we are working on methods for doing this and will be reporting to the House shortly about these methods.

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether one of the measures he is taking to ensure that such tariff cuts, etc., will be translated into lower prices was the increase in corporation taxes which he put into effect on January 1 for all corporations, all lines of business, in this country except manufacturing and processing?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): The government is, through the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of National Revenue, in the process of monitoring the effects of the sales tax removal and other commodity tax cuts contained in the budget.

An hon. Member: Another study?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): No, it is in operation.

FOOD PRICE INCREASES—POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRICES REVIEW BOARD

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that a