

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether I would table the figures, my answer was yes. If he wants me to reiterate what I told the labour movement this morning I shall. I said that our fight against inflation was not intended to prevent redistribution of income in the country, nor would it have that effect. I said it was merely a short-term fight against inflation and I outlined the steps that had to be taken now. I will gladly include this in the document that I will table, but it will then no longer be the document authorized to be presented to this House.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There seems to be some difficulty. The House has agreed to allow the Prime Minister to table a document. The suggestion now is that something else be tabled. The consent of the House would have to be sought in this regard. Perhaps we might return to this subject later since other hon. members appear to be anxious to ask questions.

MANITOBA CENTENNIAL**SUGGESTED INVITATION TO QUEEN TO OPEN SESSION OF LEGISLATURE**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and it has to do with the suggestion of Premier Schreyer of Manitoba that, as part of the Manitoba centennial celebrations, the legislature of that province would like to convene on July 15, I believe, and have Her Majesty the Queen read the Speech from the Throne. For this to be done, of course, the favourable advice of the Prime Minister would be required.

Has the Prime Minister been consulted in this regard; and in any event, what would be his reaction to the suggestion of a visit that would be so widely welcomed not only in Manitoba but in the prairie provinces generally?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will have to consult my office on whether such a proposition has arrived there. I have no knowledge of it as yet, but I am interested to hear that the new government of Manitoba is taking the right hon. member for Prince Albert into its confidence on these matters.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister should not be so touchy and petulant. He is getting worse every day.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

DRUGS**APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES UNDER PATENT ACT AMENDMENTS—PLANS TO REDUCE PRICES**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs? Is he now in a position to inform the House regarding the results of his department's investigation into the applications for drug licences under the recent amendments to the Patent Act passed by the House recently, and have these investigations ascertained whether there has been collusion by members of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association in not applying for these licences?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the program has been delayed because American Home Products have been contesting the right of Parliament to deal with drug patents. They have been testing it in court, but at this time we have been successful in the Court of Appeal of Ontario. There have been two licences issued by the Commissioner of Patents, both covering a drug called diazepam which I understand has a laid-down cost in Montreal of \$87 per kilo and is now distributed by Hoffman-LaRoche at a retail cost of \$9,000.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, since the minister stated before the House committee discussing the amendments to the Patent Act concerning drug licences that if the government's legislation did not lower drug prices immediately he would consider alternative action, and since drug prices in Canada are still the highest of any industrial nation, will the minister undertake to make a statement on motions in the very near future indicating what new plans the government has to reduce drug prices in this country?

Mr. Basford: As I said, Mr. Speaker, we have been delayed by reason of the fact that American Home Products have been challenging the right of this Parliament to enact the legislation it did last session. Presuming that case is not taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, the Commissioner is proceeding as fast as he can in dealing with some 62 applications for compulsory licences which he has received. He has rendered decisions in some 11 of those cases but the licences are not being issued at the present time because of the litigation.