

*Food Prices***THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS—REQUEST FOR INDICATION OF TIME OF IMPOSITION**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo):

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Finance arises from the answer given earlier in the question period to the effect that an increase in the bank rate might be inflationary. Can the minister indicate whether the government is now prepared to accept a temporary system of wage and price controls and, if not, can he indicate whether we are near the rate of inflation in which this emergency plan would be put into effect?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part is no, and the second part of the question has been discussed quite often before in the House.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege relating to part of the answer given to me by the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The minister, deliberately or otherwise, reflected on my attendance in the House. I do not think the minister has the right to do that. I think my attendance here, Sir, would match his. Indeed, I have not taken time off this year to go skiing at Banff.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I was not so much concerned about the presence or absence of the hon. member as about his attentiveness.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now revert to the consideration of the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis).

• (1520)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**FOOD PRICES****CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

On the order: Motions:

April 3, 1973—Mrs. MacInnis:

That the First Report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, presented to the House on April 2, 1973, be concurred in.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order with respect to the first report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices. My purpose in raising this point of order is not to seek to have the motion ruled out or that the subject matter of it not be dealt with; rather, I want to enter a reservation with respect to the form of recommendation No. 6 of that report which reads:

That the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs make specific monies available to consumers groups to present briefs to various governmental boards where appropriate.

[Mr. Cafik.]

I make no comment on the substance of the recommendation. It seems to me that it touches upon the whole question of the financial initiative of the executive and it would be unfortunate if, in allowing this kind of language, an important principle of government were overlooked. If the recommendation could be put in the form that has been used in the two preceding recommendations, namely, that the government consider or give consideration to the advisability, etc., it would be better. If the final recommendation could be put in that form, instead of in the form in which it now is, there would be no objection whatsoever to allowing the motion to be dealt with.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how serious the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) is in raising this point of order, nor do I know how serious Your Honour was when you raised the same question a few days ago. In case there is any doubt about the right of the House to proceed with the motion to concur in the first report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, I should like to say a few words.

First, I suggest that the rules against the making of motions involving an expenditure of money all say quite clearly that there must be no direct instruction to the government to spend any public money. I point out that the report before us now, which was tabled on Monday, April 2, as set out in *Votes and Proceedings* for that day, ends with a section entitled, "Recommendations", and then these words appear: "The Committee recommends." After that introduction there follow six different paragraphs, and I suggest that each of those paragraphs is governed by that introductory phrase, "The Committee recommends." Therefore, one should read paragraph 6 not by itself, but with the introductory words, so that what is before us in paragraph 6 is the proposal that the Committee recommends "That the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs make specific monies available to the consumer groups to present briefs to various governmental boards, where appropriate."

Just as the passing of this report by the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices did not put that expenditure into effect, so I submit that if the motion to concur in this report today were carried, it would not be an instruction that money be spent. Rather, it would be a recommendation to the government to consider that proposal.

However, Sir, it is usually regarded as desirable when matters like this arise to ascertain whether there are any precedents. Although I have not spent all my time since Your Honour raised this question looking for precedents, this morning I managed to look at a few that came readily to mind because they related to the reports of a committee of which I have the honour to be a member. For example, on Friday, February 23, 1973 as noted on *Votes and Proceedings* for that date at page 141, there is this entry:

Mr. Dupras, from the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, presented the First Report of the said Committee, which is as follows:

Pursuant to its Order of Reference of February 15, 1973, your Committee has considered the Report of the Joint Study group on Basic Rate of Pensions, and has agreed to report it with the Committee's endorsement.