

Inquiries of the Ministry

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hees: No, Mr. Speaker, we do not have to wait until the hon. member resigns, which he has no intention of doing. I challenge you to face me in a debate; you will not accept it because you know your policies will not stand up to public scrutiny.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hees: If you have any courage, accept that challenge on behalf of the government.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): That's right. Put up or shut up.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS**ACTION RESPECTING FURTHER INCREASE IN PRICE OF COFFEE**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs regarding the announcement by General Foods Limited of Canada, a subsidiary of General Foods Corporation of the United States, that they are now increasing the price of coffee by six cents a pound following an increase of four cents a pound last December and also last October, thus bringing about a very considerable increase of some 14 cents a pound over a period of six or seven months. Does this increase come within the guidelines that were set down at the price stability conference? If not, what action is the minister's department proposing to take with regard to this increase?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is believed that all these increases are due to increasing world prices from exporting nations, and the hon. member has undoubtedly seen such statements over the past six months. However, the matter was brought to the attention of the Prices and Incomes Commission some little while ago.

Mr. Baldwin: They are no longer the housewife's friend.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have seen the statements to which the minister refers. Since it is the minister's responsibility to see whether these are valid reasons or merely excuses for these increases, I am asking whether his department has secured the necessary information to determine whether these three

successive increases in the price of coffee were warranted or were just exorbitant profiteering? If the latter, what action does the minister propose to take?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago that the matter had been brought to the attention of the Prices and Incomes Commission some little while ago. It is the commission's responsibility to determine the factors that the hon. member has raised.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the findings of the Prices and Incomes Commission be made public? We have had matters referred to them for some time and nothing seems to happen. Will the minister undertake to publish the findings of the Prices and Incomes Commission with regard to these particular increases?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, all the findings of the Prices and Incomes Commission as a result of their price reviews will be made public. Quite a number have already been made public. I am sorry that the leader of the New Democratic Party is not aware that several reports have already been tabled in the House.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister prevail upon the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission, who comes under the minister's direction, to stop making speeches throughout the country long enough to enable him to appear before the committee more often than once every three weeks?

FORECAST INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES AND ANTI-INFLATION POLICY

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Following the announcement last week that the general investment plans of Canadian companies for the forthcoming year call for expenditures of approximately 14 per cent more than last year, does the Prime Minister not consider that this evidence ought to call into serious question his whole anti-inflation policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the facts the hon. member refers to. I will look them up and draw my own conclusions.