

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 11, 1975

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF SHORTAGE OF MASON JAR LIDS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to propose a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity following an answer given Wednesday in reply to a question directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs regarding the shortage of Mason jar lids in British Columbia. At that time the minister said "products are available in sufficient quantities". A quick check of four stores in the Okanagan Valley indicated that not one lid was available in any of them. A call to Smithers received the same answer in respect of that area, and word from the Fraser Valley indicates there are none available there. I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson):

That this House direct the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to launch an immediate investigation of the situation before the shortage become critical and irreparable.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. It being proposed pursuant to Standing Order 43 it cannot be debated without the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—DEGREE OF STIMULATION IN BUDGET
DEPENDANT ON CONSENSUS ON RESTRAINT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance indicated to the first ministers yesterday that the present phase of the consensus program will continue for a few weeks at least, but once again no commitments are being sought at this stage. Could the minister indicate when he will be in a position, or how he plans to be in a position to reach a sufficient

judgment of the outcome of these consensus talks in order to decide how much stimulation is going to be put in the budget which he says he will be presenting to this House before the end of May, particularly in view of his statement to the press yesterday to the effect that the degree of stimulus would depend upon the success of the consensus talks?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I said that was one of the factors against which the stimulus would have to be calculated, and there are others, as the hon. gentleman knows, some of which I outlined in response to his question on Tuesday when I announced that I will be bringing a budget down before the end of May. Consultations with various segments of the economy are now continuing with more precision, and I would hope that we will know whether we have the possibility of a consensus by the end of May.

INFLATION—UNWILLINGNESS OF ONE SECTOR TO EXERCISE
RESTRAINT UNLESS OTHER SECTORS ACT IN SIMILAR
MANNER—MECHANISM FOR ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the minister said in his statement yesterday, and I guess we would all have to concur in this, that he found that no group was willing to exercise restraint unless it was absolutely certain that others were going to accept a similar or corresponding degree of restraint at the same time.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister how he proposes to meet this essential precondition when he and his colleagues unilaterally rule out all mechanisms that could in fact enforce that kind of certainty, which certainly cannot be provided by the resurrection of the Prices and Incomes Commission or anything of that sort?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the government is relying on the facts and the evidence of the potential danger facing this country if there is not moderation in every aspect of the economy. When you look at the inflation rate, although some moderation was announced in today's figures, you will see it is still running at an annual rate, April over April, of 11.2 per cent, although the first three months of this year show it has been reducing to a rate of 7 per cent. That is not a satisfactory situation. The unemployment rate is at 7.2 per cent seasonally adjusted and our costs are rising in productive terms at roughly twice the rate of that in the United States. These facts are not only evident to everybody in the House, but as well to the leaders of every