

Inquiries of the Ministry

become a little too long and if there was some way to ask those who prepare the comments that explain the decision taken by the government to be briefer I think it would be helpful all around. I think perhaps the comments made also by private members who have brought forward these notices of motions should also be somewhat briefer. Practically every time these notices of motions are considered arguments occur between the government side and private members putting their motions. I would suggest that my remarks be taken into account next fall.

Mr. Baldwin: I think 60 words for each side should be enough.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining notices of motions stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY****INFLATION—POSITION OF SIX PER CENT WAGE INCREASE GUIDELINE—MEETING SUGGESTED BY LABOUR CONGRESS**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Finance whether, in view of the rejection by the Canadian Labour Congress of the guideline proposal put forward by the Prices and Incomes Commission, the 6 per cent guideline of the government is still the policy of the government? If so, does the government propose to take any measures to implement it?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is still the policy of the government.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the government propose to take any measures to implement this policy, or does it intend simply to leave it to the Prices and Incomes Commission to administer what perhaps might be regarded as one of the central responsibilities of the government?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the government at the proper moment accepts its responsibilities. We have agreed with the guideline, as have other governments, and the Prices and Incomes Commission will be watching to see whether there is adherence to the guideline.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, we do not need a commission to watch that, the way things are now. My final supplementary is this: in view of the rejection of the proposal and in view of the proposal made by the Canadian Labour Congress that the government should convene a meeting of industry, labour and government to consider an appropriate course of conduct, does the government propose to convene such a meeting?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, organized labour has come a little late in making this proposal. This is the same proposal which was made by the Prices and Incomes Commission last fall and which labour refused to accept at that particular time.

Mr. Stanfield: So the government is not going ahead.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, insasmuch as the Canadian Labour Congress, following a meeting with the Prices and Incomes Commission, described voluntary restraints as being basically unsound, highly inequitable and totally unworkable and proposed that the government rather than the Prices and Incomes Commission convene a meeting between business and labour to work out more realistic and co-operative programs to deal with economic problems in Canada, did I understand the minister to say that the minister on the part of the government is rejecting this proposal for the convening of a meeting with labour and industry?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the government is considering this proposal. We have a Prices and Incomes Commission which has been trying to do exactly this for quite some time. Labour has refused to co-operate.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question. In view of the fact that the Prices and Incomes Commission is a commission of inquiry appointed under the Inquiries Act and is not an administrative body and the power lies with the government, is the government prepared to convene such a conference which labour has indicated it is prepared to attend?

Mr. Benson: As I said in answer to the previous question, Mr. Speaker, the government is considering the matter. We have a Prices and Incomes Commission which tried to convene such a conference. Labour refused to attend.