

Oral Questions

ment I made in the House proves that Quebec and this government are co-operating very closely.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Annapolis Valley.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. member will allow me to recognize the hon. member for Bellechasse. I was not looking in his direction and I believe he has a supplementary.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Bellechasse has the floor and I will recognize afterwards the hon. member for Annapolis Valley.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer but I would like to ask him a supplementary question. Since there is urgency in that field, I would like him to specify, if possible, what progress has been made in the negotiations and if we can expect a statement in that connection in the days or weeks to come?

[*English*]

Mr. Whelan: I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, but I would tell the hon. member that we are discussing with the province of Quebec and the other provinces many other ways of doing the very same thing.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**INFLATION—INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO COMBAT AND PARTICIPATION OF PRIME MINISTER IN SPECIAL DEBATE**

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the problem of inflation affects all departments of all governments, and since the Prime Minister commented on December 23, 1969, in regard to inflation that "We can only get tougher, we can't get weaker", and a year later, on December 24, said "Inflation no longer exists in Canada; we've come around the corner", I would ask the Prime Minister whether he intends to participate in the debate tonight so that we can find out what we have in Canada and what happened when we went around that corner?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I had occasion to participate in the debate tonight I would indicate that in economic policy you are never dealing with an immobile economy, that you can at one point in time bring inflation down to zero or near zero as inflation was when I made that statement. The whole purpose of economic policy is to react constantly to changing economic reality and this is exactly what we did, as the Minister of Finance has indicated in his answers. Instead of reacting a month later, as the Leader of the Opposition has done, as soon as the facts about the economy were known we did not wait for the statistics but brought in this series of legislative items.

[*Mr. Whelan.*]

Mr. Nowlan: I appreciate that the Prime Minister may have some conflicts ahead of him this weekend, but if he is not going to participate in the debate tonight and give some leadership to this land, rather than talking about a month or six months ago, does he intend to make a statement either in the House or on the national media outlining the government measures that have been and will be taken, or does he intend to let the Minister of Finance strangle slowly with the albatross of inflation around his neck?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I did not rule out the possibility of my participating in the debate. However, I feel it is wise to wait and see which of the many spokesmen on finance in the Conservative party will take the floor tonight so I can see whether, indeed, I need answer them.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have reached the end of the question period and there are a number of members who unfortunately did not have the opportunity to be recognized.

As this is a special day, I think the Chair might take this occasion to mention to hon. members that discussions might be held between the party representatives with a view to not waiting until eight o'clock this evening to have the debate. The Chair has no alternative under Standing Order 26 but to say that the debate is put over to eight o'clock in the evening, but hon. members might well consider the possibility of having the debate start at four or five o'clock this afternoon, which might mean that the debate would finish a little earlier and we might have a brighter participation in the latter part of the debate. Orders of the day.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**WEEKLY STATEMENT**

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting House Leader in these days of national emergency what the business will be for next week? I ask this on behalf of the opposition parties in the House.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, may I say first of all that we would welcome action on your suggestion and an immediate taking up of the discussion of this important matter so that we can further elaborate on the points we were attempting to make during the last hour.

We would propose, either this afternoon in the one event or tomorrow in the other event, to proceed with the second reading stages of items No. 43, the Canada Pension Plan amendments, No. 44, the Parole Act, No. 26, the CNR financing bill, and No. 40, the Co-operative Credit Associations Act. Then, if these have been cleared, or perhaps in any case, on Monday we propose to call Item No. 42 in regard to the Customs Act, Item No. 17 in regard to the proposed Residential Mortgages Act and Item No. 59 in respect of the corporations act. This would be subject, of course, to further discussions with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) about taking up the bill in respect of foreign investment review at the report stage.