

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I think there is a general belief that it will be best for those who are going to be involved in voluntary restraints to work out the criteria. Of course, the government has all along supported the efforts of the Prices and Incomes Commission, which is a good deal more than the opposition has done.

Mr. Stanfield: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the minister's suggestion that everything is to be left on a purely voluntary basis, what comment has the minister to make on the indication by the chairman of the commission that if violations take place the commission will resort to the government for sanctions? Will the minister indicate to the House what sort of sanctions the government might impose in the case of violations of the criteria that may be agreed on?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, we have from the beginning supported the laudable efforts of the Prices and Incomes Commission, and when they approach the government for support we will do everything reasonable to support them in their very laudable efforts.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister not relieve the mind of the Leader of the Opposition and the minds of the people of Canada by indicating that he is taking steps to persuade the automobile insurance companies to hold back on their announced premium increases, which in some cases will be in the order of 13 per cent?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, having just returned to Ottawa today after visiting the wonderful new city of Thunder Bay, I have not had the matter brought to my attention. I have not had an opportunity to deal with this matter, but at the suggestion of my hon. friend I will look into it.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I take it from the reply by the Minister of Finance that the government does not have in mind any specific sanctions in case of violations?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, this government keeps thinking, which is more than the opposition does.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): A supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the continuous rise in consumer food costs, is the Prices and Incomes Commission making any attempt to

[Mr. Stanfield.]

determine such price increases being made by the food processors and distributors concerned?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the minister who usually answers for the Prices and Incomes Commission is not here. However, I will refer the hon. member's query to the commission.

[Later:]

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): A supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. Is the minister not aware of the Prime Minister's statement to the effect that only two-thirds of his cabinet are worth while?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

SCIENCE COUNCIL**CONFLICT OF INTEREST OF CHAIRMAN**

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the Science Council of Canada must be free to function in the best interests of the public and in view of the fact that its present chairman, Dr. O. M. Solandt, is also vice-chairman of the Electric Reduction Company of Canada, a firm which has contributed substantially to water pollution in Canada, is the government giving consideration to ending this serious conflict of interest by requesting the resignation of Dr. Solandt?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond.

Mrs. MacInnis: The Prime Minister was rising to answer, I believe, Mr. Speaker.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was trying to get help.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. MacInnis: May I ask a supplementary which may help? I would like to help and I direct this supplementary to the Prime Minister for his consideration. Since Dr. Solandt has publicly discounted the importance of phosphate water pollution, and since his firm is the sole manufacturer of phosphates in Canada, will the Prime Minister investigate this matter and indicate to the House what action the government intends to take?

[Later:]

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): A supplementary question to the Prime Minis-