

Oral Questions

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, we have a real smart guy over there.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the minister will confine himself to answering the question.

Mr. Allmand: If the opposition thinks there is any contradiction between what I am saying and what the RCMP have on record, my estimates will be before the committee in a day or two and the RCMP will be there. Hon. members can come and put the same questions to the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: It seems to me that the minister is abdicating his responsibility. The minister knows darn well that when I talk about records, I talk about the records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for which he has responsibility. All we want is the truth. Will the minister, as I said, look into the records of the RCMP and determine whether it was his officials who first went to the Hamilton police or the OPP and who it was, or whether it was a member of the city council, and when; the records should reveal that. I am not talking about the records of the Solicitor General. I am talking about the RCMP records for which he has responsibility.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I already said at the beginning of the question period that I would do that. The hon. member has not been listening.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INQUIRY AS TO NEW MEASURES TO STIMULATE FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I sense that the Minister of Finance is feeling neglected this afternoon.

An hon. Member: Did he write you a note?

Mr. Stanfield: With friends like that the Minister of Finance hardly needs enemies.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, following what he described as his fruitful conversations with Mr. Simon, the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield:—whether, having had the benefit of those conversations he is now in a position to act upon or even speak about any new initiatives to improve the Canadian economy.

Mr. Muir: Why don't you get Simon for leader, John? He'd be a big improvement.

An hon. Member: In what party?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we had some thorough conversations between ourselves and we also had the benefit of the reaction of the Secretary of the Treasury to comments put to him by several of my colleagues having economic portfolios. We will want to digest what he has said and his analysis of the American economy in due course as we reflect upon the stimulus already injected into the Canadian economy and the way in which a package of measures can be worked out between the United States administration and congress both in the energy field and in the economic field. Then, at an appropriate time, I will be back before the House.

An hon. Member: Did he sell you a ratchett?

INFLATION—OBJECTIVE IN SEEKING CONSENSUS OF VARIOUS GROUPS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether Mr. Simon sells ratchetts, but the minister expressed concern about strikes and creating more unemployment, and he also expressed concern about the escalation in the level of wages as a result of settlements in this country. In view of the fact that the only activity we see these days in the Department of Finance, apart from the elimination of the group of seven from the Prime Minister's office, is the so-called consensus effort, can the minister now tell us upon what the government of Canada has been seeking co-operation? Yesterday the Acting Prime Minister said to me that I was expecting something which is not there. I want to know what is there.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): The hon. gentleman and I have had several exchanges, some at length and some in a fairly curtailed way within the rules of the House at this stage of the proceeding. I can say to him, as I said to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates yesterday, that the rise in the rate of inflation is still not satisfactory despite some easing of the rate on an annual basis, below double digit. The rate is unsatisfactory despite the fact that an easing in wholesale prices and commodity prices will work its way through the economy, but the most disturbing feature of the current situation is the cost increases to which the hon. gentleman alluded reflecting wage settlements now running at roughly more than twice the rate of settlements in the United States. If these settlements in Canada continue at this comparative rate, Canada will find itself in an increasingly difficult position in our competitive ability in the world. This will jeopardize our exports and threaten Canadian jobs. I have said during the consensus process—

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): If the hon. gentleman had as much patience as he has throat, he would be a far more useful member of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): As I have said to leaders of business, leaders in the labour movement, in the professions and leaders of agriculture, I quite understand