

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

simply with the alternatives mentioned in the chairman's review unacceptable unemployment, unacceptable inflation or compulsory wage and price controls?

**Mr. Benson:** Mr. Speaker, the present situation is that Canada has a record better than that of any other western country in controlling inflation. I think this is agreed by the OECD and many other authorities. In respect of how we must proceed from here with regard to fiscal and monetary policy, I will be making our position known tomorrow night in my budget speech. How we proceed on the prices and incomes side is a matter for decision by the government, but no decision has been made at the present time.

## INFLATION—SUGGESTED MEETING OF PRIME MINISTER AND LEADERS OF ORGANIZED LABOUR

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** As the only chance of price restraint continuing into the next year rests on the slim hope that organized labour will agree to give its very necessary co-operation, will the Prime Minister even at this late date consider, as he has been urged to do many times during the past year, meeting with the leaders of organized labour in an effort to persuade them of the vital importance of giving their co-operation?

**Mr. Woolliams:** Let us have an answer.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member has already asked a supplementary question. Has he a further supplementary question?

**Mr. Hees:** May I put my question in a different way so as to make it easier for the Prime Minister to answer. Would the Prime Minister give consideration to putting his duty to the economy ahead of his fear of a rebuff and stop helping to push price restraint down the drain?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

## INFLATION—ABANDONMENT OF WAGES AND INCOMES GUIDELINE POLICY—NEW INCOMES POLICY

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether the government is prepared to try to seek an incomes policy through some organization other than the Prices and Incomes Commission which, perhaps through no fault of its own, failed to secure the confidence of labour? Is the government prepared to seek such an arrangement directly or through some other means?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** The Prices and Incomes Commission indicated yesterday what had resulted from its consultations with business. The government must consider now what steps it may be willing to undertake in the future. As I indicated previously, since last March the government has been easing substantially on the fiscal and monetary side. In the meantime, quite contrary to what my hon. friend was saying last March, the rate of increase of prices has come down in Canada.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Benson:** Yes, this has happened, quite contrary to his forecast. We are still concerned on the cost side in an expanding economy that we may move too much and put too much pressure on the economy and perhaps cause another inflationary cycle. The government must, of course, in its expansion policies consider this matter very carefully.

**Mr. Hees:** What expansion policies? You do not have any policy, expanding or otherwise, and you know it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

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## PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION

## PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS IN SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** I should like to ask a question related to the Prices and Incomes Commission and I direct it to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that the supplementary estimates which were tabled the other day do not contain any additional amounts for the commission, would he inform the House whether it is his intention to table additional estimates for the commission at some future date?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** If the provision made in the main estimates for this operation by the end of the year turns out to be inadequate, it will then be necessary to table supplementary estimates.

**Mr. Lewis:** Do I understand then that the President of the Treasury Board has not yet been able to assess the expenditure resulting from the reduced role which the chairman of the commission announced yesterday and is therefore not in a position to inform us whether additional estimates will be necessary?

**Mr. Drury:** The conclusion that I am unable to inform the hon. gentleman now whether supplementary estimates will be necessary is quite right.

**Mr. Lewis:** I should like to direct a further supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs or to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the Prices and Incomes Commission has obviously failed in its declared objectives and has lost credibility in most sectors—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member is obviously making a speech. He is debating an issue when he should ask a question.

**Mr. Lewis:** I have a question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister considering abolishing the commission or at least firing its pontificating chairman?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** No, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.