

the House that in his new budget the Minister of Finance will come forward with a program to deal primarily with unemployment and productivity, and not with inflation?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman is pressing an opposition which is not justified. I do not think it is possible to improve the employment situation by following inflationary policies, and the government does not intend to follow them. What it is following now is a sound expansionary policy. I only wish we had as much support for this as we should have.

Mr. Broadbent: Is the Acting Prime Minister aware that virtually 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the economists in this country—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. member for Prince Albert on a supplementary.

SUGGESTED REPEGGING OF CANADIAN DOLLAR AT FIXED EXCHANGE RATE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I preface my question by saying that under no circumstances would I support a move to reduce the salary of the Minister of Finance to \$1. I do not want to see him made a goat, even though he has been made a sheep in following some of the government's policies. I want to ask the minister whether, having regard to all the circumstances set out by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings, and this being the first anniversary of the ending of the peg on the dollar, the government is giving consideration now to the restoration of the peg?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I really could not answer that question in the House at this time. If the government made a decision in this regard it would be announced in the normal manner.

INFLATION—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF PROPOSALS FOR CONTROL UNDER STUDY

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. In light of the admission of the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission that they are studying a variety of control systems, is the government going to table these proposals and provide them to the provinces for their consideration?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. If it became necessary to apply price and wage controls I should think it would be under circumstances in which the government would act in an emergency, and under such circumstances I do not think one could call one's shots very far in advance.

Mr. Ryan: Does the Acting Prime Minister share the view of the Chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission that the Canadian economy is now not manageable and—

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That question is not in order. I will recognize a few additional questions on this subject, but I suggest that following that we should move to the next subject. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for St. John's East.

INFLATION—FERRY FARE INCREASE, NORTH SYDNEY-PORT AUX BASQUES—APPROVAL BY GOVERNMENT OR PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister, and I ask it of him in the absence of the Minister of Transport. Has the government approved the substantial and extravagant increases in the ferry rates between Newfoundland and the mainland, which will have such a detrimental effect on the already critical economy of Newfoundland?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a question that should be directed to the Minister of Transport who has primary responsibility. He will be in the House early next week.

Mr. McGrath: Then, Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Perhaps I might have a little more luck with him. The matter certainly falls within his area of responsibility. Has the Prices and Incomes Commission approved the extravagant increases in ferry rates on CNR ferries operating between Newfoundland and the mainland and, if not, will the minister assure the House that he will refer this matter to the commission?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is not the purpose of the Prices and Incomes Commission to approve rate increases or rate structures. Whether they are examining these particular rates or increases is something I will have to determine.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION—EVIDENCE OF EMERGENCY—IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINGENCY PLANS

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether the government has any early predictions for the level of unemployment during the month of May, whether it has made any calculations itself, whether it can give the House an indication of its expectations, and whether in fact the government has evidence that the economy is in an emergency state of affairs and as a result of this fact, and because of the facts mentioned by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings, whether the government will introduce price and wage controls during the budget statement on June 17 or June 18?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it the unemployment survey is being taken this week and will not be reported until the second week or third week in June. With respect to what is going to be in the budget, of course the hon. member will have to wait until the budget comes.

Mr. Lundrigan: As a supplementary—