

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

ever. Faced with the high cost of living, they live in anxiety and in the expectation of positive results from this administration.

● (10:20 p.m.)

How can inflation be created without the administrators being aware of it? Of what use have been the royal commissions and task forces set up since 1960? Have not two inquiries been ordered in 1961, one on health and the other on taxation? In 1962, an inquiry was caused to be conducted on banking and finance and in 1963, another on biculturalism and bilingualism.

In 1964, the first report of the Economic Council of Canada was tabled in the House. Did it not deal with the economic outlooks for Canada for the period ending in 1970?

Since 1965, of what use have been the reports of the Tariff Board?

Since 1966, what steps have been taken following the report of the joint special committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on consumer credit?

Since 1967, what advantages have consumers derived from the establishment of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

In 1968, were not the elections to cure our economic difficulties? And you remember that economic problems were but the result of the administration of a minority government while a majority government would have been necessary to restore the balance. Where is this balance that this government was going to bring us?

What will bring us, in 1970, the Prices and Incomes Commission which was created in 1969? Will it explain why the people have to tighten their belts while the Prime Minister is increasing his allowance? In view of the fact that the Prime Minister has already covered the distance between Montreal and James Bay on foot and by canoe, will the Commission recommend to him not to use government airplanes any more?

Will the Prices and Incomes Commission reveal that it is the increase of taxes of all sorts which is mainly responsible for pushing the cost of living up? Will it tell the government that it is useless to count on the co-operation of workers from small businesses with a low income and that it cannot rely on the co-operation of labour unions to check the increase in the cost of living, since in heavy industry where there are unions the salaries they have succeeded in obtaining for the employees represent but 6 per cent of the finished product?

[Mr. Godin.]

Will the Commission make the government understand that the farmers are very badly paid, whether for their dairy products or for their wheat?

Will the Commission take into account that the grocer, the wholesaler, the milkman work for fractions of a cent, and that on each \$19 purchase of cigarettes the value of work and tobacco represent but \$3 and \$16 are for taxes?

Will the Prices and Incomes Commission make known to the population that without taxes, gas would sell at 4 cents a gallon?

Will the members of the Prices and Incomes Commission be honest enough to admit that they are dealing with imaginary bandits and that the thieves are not those they are asked to find?

Since under the present system the Canadian government gets the largest share of the profits, can we expect an income tax reduction shortly? In January, the American government reduced by 5 per cent its so-called Viet Nam tax and will reduce it by a further 5 per cent in June. Can we expect something similar from the Canadian government, since the Prime Minister stated on February 9, and I quote:

Control of inflation is a challenge for Canada as well as for our neighbours and our competitors. We cannot afford to do less than they are doing.

In order to do as well as the Americans, on what items of the fiscal revenues will the next reductions be applied? Will they be applied to estate taxes, the excise tax, the 12 per cent sales tax or the personal income tax? Will the reductions be applied to the 4 per cent personal income tax, or the 3 per cent one or on the so-called social development tax of 2 per cent, or again on the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials?

Mr. Speaker, questions are asked every time new taxes are levied and all Canadians are entitled to an answer.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, the government wants to help consumers and all Canadians. That is why they are engaged in a close fight in order to check inflation, which hurts everybody, especially low-income Canadians.

This afternoon, I made a statement in which I said that the government had decided to postpone until 1971 the proclamation of a new tax on air fares, which was passed by Parliament last fall.