

*Oral Questions*ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—SUGGESTED SUBSIDIES FOR
ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A supplementary question. In view of the fact that some of the major increases in the area of food are within our power to control, for example, dairy products and bread, as well as beef, pork and milk, would the government consider restoring some of the consumer subsidies for some of these essential food items in view of the fact that the present program will not in any way control these prices?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would refer the hon. gentleman to the statements of many of his colleagues insisting that government expenditures be reduced. It seems to me there is a balance in this and that we could of course drastically reduce prices through a very substantial payment from the public treasury. The question is whether we should increase government expenditures for the purpose of doing so. We have decided they should not be increased beyond those at the present time.

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MANPOWER

ISSUANCE OF WORK PERMITS TO UNITED STATES RESIDENTS
FOR CONSTRUCTION WORK IN SARNIA AREA—CONSULTATION
WITH UNIONS CONCERNED

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and results from the decision by the Department of Manpower and Immigration to issue nearly 1,000 work permits to United States residents to fill construction jobs in the Sarnia area. Can the minister assure this House that all Canadian manpower centres and construction unions in Sarnia, London, Windsor, Hamilton and Toronto were notified by manpower officials of those job opportunities before the work permits in question were issued so that unemployed construction workers in Canada qualified to fill these vacancies were not overlooked?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Sarnia project is a sizeable one. We do estimate a shortfall from Canadian sources between now and next spring of about 970 workers. The estimate is based on thorough consultation with the unions in Sarnia and with the industry. There is strong concurrence by all the parties to whom we have talked. There is a close and continuous liaison between manpower officials and union representatives at the national level regarding this and other such major construction projects to ensure that there is continuous dissemination of job vacancy information across the country. I am informed that the Sarnia locals of the principal unions concerned also send continuous and up-to-date information on job opportunities to their counterparts through their hiring hall system. All CMCs are continually seeking workers, through the national network with the skills concerned. In this particular case, we did concur after being advised by both union and management that temporarily there was no other solution. I want to check with a more direct contact with the

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Toronto and Hamilton unions as to just what more can be done.

An hon. Member: Keep it for tonight.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—COMMITMENT OF PROVINCES TO
PROGRAM

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Finance. It is now some three weeks since the Prime Minister outlined to the provincial premiers the government's so-called anti-inflation program and two weeks since the Minister of Finance met with provincial ministers of finance. Has the government yet received a specific response from each of the ten provinces on the very fundamental question which provinces are now committed to join the federal program or to adopt parallel guidelines to the federal program? I am referring specifically to those areas peculiarly within provincial jurisdiction.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have received definitive responses from Ontario and Quebec. I think it is fair to say that other provinces have indicated their willingness to participate in the program in general. Several of them have reserved for further consideration some of the problems to be met. We hope to have from them at an early date the sort of firm confirmation we have had from Ontario and Quebec so that we may go ahead with the plan on this basis. Officials propose to meet on the 19th and 20th of this month for the purpose of discussing the program. I shall suggest a ministers' meeting after that. We hope that the provinces then can indicate to us definitively their willingness to participate, either with a proposal such as Quebec's, that is, with their own programs for the public sector, or by opting in to our program, as Ontario proposes.

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—COMMITMENT OF QUEBEC TO
FEDERAL GUIDELINES—POSSIBILITY OF VARIATION BETWEEN
PROVINCES IN GUIDELINES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As the minister indicated that he received a firm response from the province of Quebec, can he tell the House if Quebec has given the commitment that it will follow the federal guidelines, or is the province reserving its position to establish its own guidelines within jurisdiction it is reserving unto itself?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would want to examine the exact terms of the Quebec bill, which was introduced, I think, the day before yesterday. Generally, I understand that the Quebec system would follow the federal guidelines in this respect. They recognize and indicated at the federal-provincial conference that, so far as possible, disparities between the Quebec system and that of any other province should be kept to a minimum.