

Inquiries of the Ministry

adopt as a guideline for 1970 the consensus reported to have been widely adopted yesterday and the day before with regard to price restraint?

Mr. Benson: Who spat on the Prices and Incomes Commission?

Mr. Speaker: May I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the question as asked is not proper. If he will refer to the relevant references and citations I am sure he will agree with me that the question was perhaps not in accordance with the procedural requirements of the House. However, since the question has been asked, perhaps the minister might now reply.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I congratulated the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission yesterday on the announcement that was made. I think it represents an extremely useful initiative. There are many implications flowing from the statement on pricing criteria made last night. We shall be meeting within the next few days with members of the commission to consider what implications there are for government. We shall also be discussing with all provincial governments the implications flowing from the statement. We shall be discussing them with the provincial premiers on Monday.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell the House what sort of proposition the government intends to make to the provinces with regard to the guideline or consensus which was achieved? Specifically, what support does the government want from the provinces?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I have said in the House before that I hope we shall make the program of the Prices and Incomes Commission as effective as possible. What the government of Canada's position with the provincial premiers will be on Monday and Tuesday is, I think, a proper subject for the Prime Minister to deal with.

Mr. Stanfield: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister intend to propose any legislation to the House with regard to this matter? Does the government intend to rely simply on moral suasion or does it propose to take punitive action, if necessary, in order to enforce this consensus?

Mr. Sharp: What do you advocate?

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I must repeat what I have said. We are studying with the commission the implications of what has taken place—

Mr. Stanfield: You have no policy at all. Sit down.

Mr. Benson: You have no ideas either.

Mr. Basford: —and whether further action is called for or not will be announced in due course.

Mr. Stanfield: You have no policy.

Mr. Basford: I should think, from my reading of the hon. gentleman's speeches over a period of time, that he would welcome the statement that was made.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: You have no policy. We have had two years of talking and doing nothing.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister about the price stability conference which concluded its hearings yesterday. Inasmuch as the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission indicated that the next step is to take this matter to the federal-provincial conference, does the government of Canada intend to ask the provinces to take concurrent action to give to the Prices and Incomes Commission the power to make the agreement reached in the last few days applicable, to use Dr. Young's words, to the entire business economy? Does the government intend to ask the provinces to give the commission the power of sanction so as to deal with price increases which have already been put into effect?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs just said—

An hon. Member: He has not said anything.

Mr. Stanfield: No. He has not said anything.

Mr. Crouse: Neither has the Prime Minister.

Mr. Trudeau: Obviously you do not want information.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission indicated that the