

situation which might arise out of an international crisis and which would create very serious problems for all western industrialized countries.

However, these measures are aimed at a very serious crisis of an international nature, and rationing is not a matter which is under consideration by this government.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT EXCISE TAX BE RESCINDED

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture, who during the early weeks of 1980 expressed himself as being completely and totally opposed to the excise tax as it was originally proposed by the hon. member for St. John's West. However, since he has been appointed to his high office, he has indicated that he would review the imposition of that excise tax.

Is the minister prepared to take some positive action to rescind that excise tax because of its oppressive, depressive nature and in light of today's announcement on continuing high inflation costs?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, my opinions about that tax have not changed very much. I am currently having very detailed discussions with my colleagues in cabinet.

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, in light of the comment made by the Minister of Agriculture, I direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Finance.

Earlier, the Minister of Finance indicated that he, too, would review the imposition of that harsh, excessive tax as it is applied to the Canadian wine industry. Is the minister now prepared to say whether or not that review has been completed? The fact that the tax has been imposed is an indication that the review has been completed and of the disdain which the government holds for the Canadian wine industry and Canadian grape growers.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the representations which have been made by members of the government party, by the hon. member and by representatives of the wine growers, are still under consideration. It was certainly not my intention, in reintroducing the proposals of my predecessor, to place an undue burden upon the grape growers. I would be very concerned if any undue burden did occur. I can assure the hon. member that I am still considering the matter.

Oral Questions

STUDENT AID PROGRAMS

INPUT BY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Peter Lang (Kitchener): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. Does the Secretary of State plan to act on representations made by the National Union of Students and other student bodies that students be given the opportunity to provide a more satisfactory input into the review of student aid programs?

● (1150)

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kitchener for raising this question. It is obviously a question of great interest not only to university students in his home area of Kitchener-Waterloo, but also to university students right across this country.

An hon. Member: Sit down, Francis.

Mr. Fox: Perhaps, to set the record straight, I should start off by saying that the previous Conservative government and the Council of Ministers of Education did not provide for any student representation or even any student input into that very important federal-provincial task force looking at student aid policies in this country.

An hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Fox: I had the opportunity of meeting with representatives of the National Union of Students on May 14 this year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fox: I would very much like to answer this question, because it is of great interest to student groups across the country.

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Fox: It is obviously not of interest to the previous Conservative government or to the present members of the opposition. As a result of this meeting with representatives of the National Union of Students on May 14, I decided to raise the matter once again with the Council of Ministers of Education. I met with the chairman of the Council of Ministers of Education in Victoria on May 27 last to discuss this matter more fully.

An hon. Member: Come on.

Mr. Crosbie: Sit down.

An hon. Member: Order.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would like ask hon. members to allow the minister to answer the question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!