

Oral Questions

the level of the formula agreed to in 1973, and calls on the Minister of Veterans Affairs to take this issue back to the cabinet so that the increase our veterans deserve can be agreed to and put into effect without further delay.

Mr. Speaker: Presentation of such a motion for discussion, pursuant to Standing Order 43, requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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[Translation]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

REQUEST FOR NEW BANK OF CANADA CREDIT TO FINANCE
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the terms of Standing Order 43, I request the unanimous consent of the House to present a motion dealing with an important and urgent matter.

As the federal government announced a few days ago that it would borrow money abroad to cover its foreign account deficit, and as Canada is backed into a corner by its debts, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert):

That the government start negotiations with the Bank of Canada so that the latter can issue new credits to finance government operations.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Pursuant to the terms of Standing Order 43, such a motion cannot be put without the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—MEASURES TO COUNTERACT
EFFECT ON FOOD PRICES

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The cost of living increases announced this morning indicate that some of the most dramatic increases were in the area of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and other imported foods. Clearly, these increased costs have been aggravated by the devaluation of the Canadian dollar. Clearly, too, the impact is hardest upon low income Canadians who spend more of their money on food than other Canadians.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Will the Minister of Finance tell us why he is allowing the impact of the devaluation to sit so unfairly upon lower income Canadians? What measures does he and his government propose to turn around a situation where the poor pay most for the devaluation of the Canadian dollar?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, of course, I have always said that devaluation of the Canadian dollar is not really only a benefit to the Canadian economy: one aspect of it is the fact that imported goods coming into Canada during the winter, especially foodstuffs, will be more expensive. That is a fact of life. I think Canadians would be well advised to be careful in their buying and make sure they are buying foods produced by Canadian farmers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

AVAILABILITY OF APPLICATION FORMS FOR EMPLOYMENT TAX
CREDIT PROGRAM

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said yesterday that the forms made available by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration, were not available in Manpower offices in some parts of Canada. I think the people who phoned on his behalf probably called the janitors, because the forms have been received in the offices referred to by him.

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, of course we can verify that later on.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Please do.

Mr. Clark: The matter I want to deal with right now is this very startling direction to the poor in Canada, that they will simply have to accept the situation where they pay far more than they used to for commodities on which they spend more of their dollars than the Minister of Finance does. The Minister of Finance says to them that it is just a fact of life. Clearly, it is an unacceptable situation to put that burden on the poor of Canada.

Will the minister not consider some slightly more generous policy than telling people that they have to put up with this fact of life? Since he is the Minister of Finance of Canada, will he not bring in some proposal, now, which will bring some aid to low income Canadians who are bearing the heaviest brunt of the economic policies of this government?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, first I should like to say to the House that, in fact, the consumer price index declined from last month to this month.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Of course, I am always startled by the opposition continually complaining about the high level of expenditures, because the hon. Leader of the Opposition just rose in the House and proposed that. I think it is impossible in