

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I think we have made the picture as clear as possible. We are reviewing the whole topic of how to supply feed grain equitably all across the nation. If the hon. member has any suggestions on how we can act any better or any faster, I would be pleased to hear them.

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OLD AGE SECURITY

INQUIRY AS TO INCREASE IN BASIC AMOUNT AND
LOWERING OF AGE OF ELIGIBILITY

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the general reference in the throne speech to the taking of steps to improve the economic conditions of old age pensioners, may I ask the minister if those steps will include an increase in the basic amount of the old age security pension? Will they also include a lowering of the eligibility age?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I expect to be able to make a statement in the House on this subject later on.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): When is "later on"? Could it be this week?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ELIGIBILITY OF LOCAL INITIATIVE PROJECT
ORGANIZERS FOR BENEFITS

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Is the government about to notify all local initiative project organizers that they are no longer eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this kind of ruling emanates from the Department of National Revenue. In light of the story that appeared in the press this morning I have asked my officials to review that aspect of it, and I shall be able to advise the House further after discussions have been completed.

Mr. Fraser: As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, can the government assure this House that organizers of local initiative projects who are contributing to the unemployment insurance fund will remain eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I would not give that assurance until I have completed the examination to which I have referred. I can, of course, assure the hon. member, and through him those people affected, that if they are not eligible for benefits all the premiums they have paid into

[Mr. Wagner.]

the fund will be refunded to them. But until this examination is completed I would not go further at this stage.

Mr. Fraser: Can the minister tell us if the reports that have appeared in the newspapers today, to which he alluded, indicate a change of policy on behalf of the government?

Mr. Andras: No, Mr. Speaker, they do not indicate a change of policy. As I indicated in my earlier answer, that decision was made by the Department of National Revenue ruling whether the person involved was an employer or not for the purpose of getting unemployment insurance benefits. What I am saying is that we are reviewing that decision with the various departments involved.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—PROPOSED PEACEKEEPING FORCE—INQUIRY
AS TO MEETING BETWEEN CANADA AND OTHER
SUGGESTED MEMBERS

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the Canadian government proposed a meeting with the other three countries that have been proposed for a peacekeeping role in Viet Nam—Hungary, Indonesia and Poland—to work out satisfactory conditions for carrying out such a role and, if not, does the Canadian government intend to propose such a meeting in the very near future?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is simply no. However, we have been in touch with representatives of these countries. Since we have not made a decision to participate, of course it would not be appropriate for us to have meetings on the basis of which we would be committed.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, since we all hope that the time is coming very close when such a peacekeeping role will be necessary, is the government simply going to allow itself to drift along once again into a situation of this kind without doing any preparatory work—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: —as has often been the case in the past?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member realizes that a question in those terms is not in order.

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INCOME TAX

TIME OF REINTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS TO ACT

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In elaboration on the reply given by the Prime Minister to the Leader of the Opposition the other day, would the minister advise the House if it is the intention of the