

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Fairweather:** Move that we adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** Did the Chair hear a motion for the adjournment of the House?

REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE OF SYSTEM OF READJUSTING REPRESENTATION AND DETERMINING NUMBER OF MEMBERS FROM EACH PROVINCE

On the order: Government Notices of Motions:

December 17, 1973—The President of the Privy Council:

That the system of readjusting representation in the House of Commons, including the method of determining the number of members for each province established by section 51 of the British North America Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Pursuant to section 2 of Standing Order 21, this motion is transferred to and ordered for consideration under government orders at the next sitting.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT POLICY TO COMBAT RISING COST OF LIVING—EFFECTIVENESS OF FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the consumer price index for the regional cities of Canada shows increases in all regional cities and substantial increases in three cities, for example, Ottawa with a 10.2 per cent increase, Quebec City with an 11 per cent increase and St. John's Newfoundland, with a 10.1 per cent increase, I ask the Prime Minister whether he now intends to wait until the finance ministers' conference at the end of January, or in the face of this new evidence that inflation in Canada is out of control will he now instruct the Minister of Finance to make a policy statement before the adjournment of the House?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and I have been discussing these matters. I cannot indicate that he will make such a statement before the House adjourns tomorrow. If it is going to sit some further time, of course we would want to reconsider the matter.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that three cities in Canada, as announced by Statistics Canada today, have shown a better than 2 per cent increase in the cost of food, and in view of the fact that the quarterly report of the Food Prices Review Board released at 2.30 today in Montreal makes no substantive recommendations to the government, I ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether he would meet with the chairman of the Food Prices Review Board to review and assess the work

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

of the board, or is he satisfied with the functions of the board to date?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to meet with the chairman. I might point out that the Food Prices Review Board has not adopted the practice of making specific recommendations in its quarterly reports. It has done so in other reports and these recommendations have provided a basis for policy action by the government, for example, increasing the subsidy on bread and the decision to advance the implementation of the increase in family allowances.

**Mr. McGrath:** Is the minister now in a position to reply to the telegram from the Consumers Association of Canada referring to the request by the Canadian Egg Marketing Board for import controls on eggs and egg products in view of the substantial increase in the cost of food and, more particularly, in view of the substantial increase in the price of eggs in Canada?

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is also referring to telegrams sent to the Prime Minister and, I think, to other ministers. This matter is under study by the government.

**Mr. McGrath:** The telegram was sent to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I ask the minister whether he agrees with the stand taken by the Consumers Association of Canada.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Do you know what it is?

**Mr. Gray:** Yes, I do. I might point out to my hon. friend that I believe the Prime Minister received the same telegram as I did and that is what I was referring to. As far as the request is concerned, I do not think there should be any action taken by the government that is not strictly necessary to help confirm that Canadians have the most adequate supply of food at the most reasonable possible prices.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. A number of members are seeking supplementaries on this subject. Perhaps we might complete the first round of questions and I will return to the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton and others who have supplementaries on this subject.

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## INDUSTRY

PROPOSED TAKEOVER OF MACDONALD TOBACCO COMPANY BY UNITED STATES FIRM—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT

**Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the recent takeover of the Macdonald Tobacco Company by R. J. Reynolds of North Carolina, and in view of the fact that the result of this sale will mean for the first time complete foreign domination