

Oral Questions

enabling people to benefit from this excellent source of protein. I would point out that the trade owns most of these birds. The National Turkey Marketing Agency does not own any at all. I understand they are all in good cold storage and that there are no signs of deterioration. They could be used in many different programs.

Mr. Murta: Can the minister advise the House what could be an acceptable figure for surpluses of turkey products in Canada as far as the Department of Agriculture is concerned?

Mr. Whelan: I look upon the supply position in this way: it is better to have a surplus position than a deficit. A surplus ensures that we are able to supply our people at reasonable prices and participate in world food programs.

* * *

INDUSTRY**FOREST INDUSTRY—POSSIBLE SALE TO CUBA AND ICELAND—
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO STIMULATE MARKETS**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In reply to a question yesterday concerning the 16,000 lay-offs in the forestry industry of British Columbia and equivalent lay-offs coming into New Brunswick and Quebec, the minister stated that his department had effected certain sales to countries like Iceland and Cuba. I should like the minister to be more specific. Was he suggesting that recent sales to those countries were going to affect lay-offs in any significant way and, if so, in what way? I should also like to ask him what he is doing in addition to deal with this situation.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the active participation of my department in seeking new export markets for the products of the forest industries of Canada. I identified some of these markets in my remarks yesterday.

Mr. Broadbent: But have you made any sales?

Mr. Gillespie: I was not suggesting that there would be an immediate short-term benefit. For that reason we have been examining other options which might sustain production during the winter.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister inform the House what the other options are so that we, and more particularly the people directly involved in these lay-offs which are taking place right through northern Canada now, will have some idea what to expect in the coming months?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the study has not yet been completed. As soon as it has been completed I will be making an announcement.

[Mr. Whelan.]

HOUSING**SUGGESTED LOWERING OF MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES—
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I put a final supplementary question. May I ask the Minister of State for Urban Affairs this question. Given the lay-offs in the lumbering industry, and also given the report this morning that Premier Davis, that well known radical from Ontario, has suggested that the government involve itself in providing mortgage money at lower interest rates so that more houses can be constructed in his province, is the government finally going to do something to bring down mortgage rates and, if so, when?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, certainly I welcome the bold initiative of the premier of Ontario in suggesting more mortgage money at lower rates would be helpful. I think this is very much in line with our innovative housing program. We have been doing this, of course, to the tune of \$1,350 million during the past year. I would very much welcome any innovative thinking on how to bring down mortgage interest rates without spending still more money. However, we are spending that money; we have spent it, and we intend to continue to stimulate housing construction. Our expenditures on housing have increased each and every year, and the effect of that spending, as a result of programs introduced by my predecessor and as a result of present programs, will have an even greater impact on the market next year.

* * *

[Translation]

ENERGY**ALLEGED REQUEST FOR SOQUIP TO ASSOCIATE WITH
PANARCTIC—REASON FOR REFUSAL**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources being absent, I shall put my question to the Acting Prime Minister.

In view of the fact that Panarctic Oils Limited is a joint venture of the federal government and the private sector which conducts explorations for oil, and that a corporation called Soquip has similar operations in Quebec, can the Acting Prime Minister tell the House if he is aware of the fact that Soquip presented a request in order to become member of the Panarctic Oils Ltd. consortium? If he is, how was that request answered?

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the question, as I recall it, related to an interest by Soquip in buying shares in Panarctic Corporation, and the government indicated that this would not be in accordance with government policy.

● (1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.