

Oral Questions

people, particularly since there seem to be abuses which are destroying the parole system?

● (1500)

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is correct. I have always given full information on any case I was asked about, and I will be pleased to continue to give full information. Furthermore, the parole and temporary absence system is not a complete mess. There has been a very low rate of failures, approximately 2 per cent, and we are trying to improve that still further so there will be no failures, if that is at all possible.

Mr. Woolliams: A further supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I seek the co-operation of hon. members at this point. I see at least 25 members seeking to ask questions or supplementaries and there are only eight or nine minutes left, so I hope there will be not too many supplementaries. When 25 to 30 members are rising with only eight minutes before the end of the question period, I am sure the House will realize that some will have to be left aside. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Calgary North on a supplementary.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I will make my supplementary brief. Will the minister tell the House and the country how many people who have been convicted of crime and murder are at the present time on temporary absence or out on parole and have not come back or have not been found by the RCMP? How many are there? Give us the information.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, it is rather difficult to understand the hon. member's question. I do not know whether he is asking about murderers or about persons convicted of all offences. If he is asking about persons convicted of all offences and he wants to know how many have been let out on parole or on temporary absence and have not returned, then I will have to get the figures for him and am quite willing to do so.

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COMBINES

CANADA CEMENT LAFARGE—REASON FOR FAILURE TO LAY CHARGES FOR PRICE FIXING IN 1973—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF B.C. CEMENT PRICES

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that Canada Cement Lafarge has been involved now in three separate incidents and charges under the Combines Investigation Act arising in different periods of time, and in view of the fact the minister was asked in June, 1973, by the hon. member for Selkirk to inquire into the activities of three cement companies, Canada Cement Lafarge being one of them, in fixing prices at \$28.72 per ton of cement, would the minister advise the House why no charges were laid in that particular case?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member [Mr. Woolliams.]

has confirmed that as a result of the work of the combines branch action has been taken in these areas. Under the act the director of the combines branch is obliged by law to undertake an inquiry whenever he has reason to believe that an offence may have been committed. He is aware of the situation and I am sure he is carrying out his responsibilities. But under the express provisions of the act it is impossible to comment on whether or not an inquiry is being carried on until the matter is completed either by a statement of the director or the taking of legal action.

Mr. Leggatt: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. In view of the recent conviction in Vancouver of the seven major cement suppliers, Canada Cement Lafarge being one of them, and in view of the fact that those charges only cover a period to December 31, 1971, would the minister now advise the House whether an inquiry is in fact going on into that particular incident to determine whether the price of cement in the province of British Columbia is now being fixed, as it was prior to December, 1971?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the act itself creates a policy that is followed not only by myself but was followed by previous ministers in this portfolio, not to confirm or deny the existence of an inquiry until the matter has been determined by the statement of the director or by action in court. However, I would be happy to see what further information I can properly provide.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta on a supplementary question and then the hon. member for Trinity.

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the same minister. In view of the fact that Lafarge and Ocean Cement of British Columbia have made two price increases since January of this year, both of which were released on the same date and both of which were in the same amount, would the minister consider holding a public inquiry into the cement industry in British Columbia in view of the connection of former Liberals with one of the companies that is presently fixing prices?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, the provisions of the Combines Investigation Act are that any inquiry that is carried on must be on a confidential basis. I would be happy to consider this matter with my colleague the Minister of Justice.

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TRADE

BAUXITE—MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA—EFFECT ON CANADA OF POSSIBLE PRICE INCREASE

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister state in general terms the outcome of his meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Manley of Jamaica regarding increased prices of bauxite from that country?