

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on a supplementary and then the hon. member for St. John's East on a supplementary.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I ask the minister if he will answer my first question: will the minister consider helping to keep down the cost to consumers by increasing the milk subsidy to producers?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, we have just increased the milk subsidy to those producers to whom we have responsibility, namely, industrial milk producers. The ones about whom the hon. member is talking are under provincial jurisdiction.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

FLUID MILK—POSSIBLE STEPS TO AVOID INCREASES IN PRODUCTION COSTS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister, by way of a supplementary question, what steps the government is prepared to take to keep milk production costs down, especially in the light of the statement of the president of the Borden milk company that we can expect another increase in the price of milk within three months?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman would take note of the items to which the president of the Borden milk company referred, he would realize that the reference was to extra cost for plastics, paper containers, etc. that are used in the industry. The Department of Agriculture does not have very much to do with that.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

IMPACT OF INCREASED MILK PRICES ON FAMILIES ON CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that there have been two or three increases in the price of milk since the subsidy program was announced last August, may I ask the minister whether he has satisfied himself regarding the impact of these increases in the price of milk on lower income families in this country, and especially on those families that depend on benefits under the Canada Assistance Plan.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, first of all the hon. member knows that such increases are decided by provincial marketing boards. They are the ones who make the decision in this respect. Second, I have indeed looked at this matter and I can confirm to the hon. member that all price increases are making it more difficult for all families. So far as the Canada Assistance Plan is concerned, we are ready to

[Mr. Whelan.]

share with the provinces whatever increases in contributions they are willing to make to families on welfare. We have encouraged the provinces to do so and several provinces have taken advantage of this encouragement of the federal government. So we are taking our responsibilities in this regard very well.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for St. John's East on a supplementary, and then we should try to limit supplementaries to some extent as we get closer to the end of the question period. After the hon. member for St. John's East, I will see the hon. member for Portneuf.

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HEALTH

SUGGESTED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH MILK—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): By way of a supplementary question may I ask the minister whether, in line with his responsibility as Minister of National Health and Welfare, he is prepared to enter into a program with the provinces, in compliance with the recommendation made to this House by the Food Prices Committee last session, to make milk available through a school program to ensure that children of Canadians on low incomes will not suffer from diet deficiencies as a consequence of inflation.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): This matter was discussed before the parliamentary committee and various views were expressed on the subject at that time.

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[Translation]

SPORTS

REASON FOR GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND NOT HOCKEY

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In a letter to a person in charge of an amateur hockey league, he once stated that the federal government had no jurisdiction over the organization and administration of any sport in particular.

Does the fact that millionaires have invested their money in professional football explain his decision to interfere in football through Bill C-22?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

Could the minister say what were his reasons for not intervening for young amateur hockey players at grips with the monopoly enjoyed by the Ontario Amateur Hockey Association?