

*Oral Questions*

Canadian Wheat Board. Does the government have any plan at this time to change the domestic price paid for wheat, at present \$1.95½ per bushel, and allow the price to float with the world price of wheat?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** No, Mr. Speaker. The government is now paying the difference between \$1.95½ and \$3 out of the treasury. In reviewing this matter recently it was decided that it would be better to continue doing that rather than shift the cost to the consumers of bread in Canada.

**Mr. Murta:** As the minister has sent a survey to wheat farmers in western Canada on the method of payment under the two-price wheat system, is not the prairie wheat producer at present being asked by this questionnaire really to subsidize the users of domestic wheat in Canada? Is this not what is really happening at present with the price of wheat?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I suggest that is not a question but argument.

## WHEAT—INQUIRY AS TO ACREAGE PAYMENT

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Justice who is in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Can we expect an acreage payment before spring planting, because additional money would be beneficial to the farmers at that time?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, the questionnaire now in the hands of farmers is part of the process of determining the method of paying to them the amount of money which will be available, which will likely be in the order of \$57 million. Part of that is clearly a consumer subsidy, if you like, on the price of bread. If an acreage payment is to be made we would expect to make it in April.

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[Translation]

## FINANCE

## REQUEST FOR DOCUMENT RESPECTING VALUE OF DOLLAR COMPARED WITH 1949

**Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Finance.

Can he give hon. members a copy of a paper from the federal government in which it is estimated that in 1973 the Canadian dollar has a value equivalent to 55 cents compared to 1949? In 24 years, therefore, the value of our dollar has decreased by 45 per cent.

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** I shall check whether such a document exists, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question.

What is the present value of the Canadian dollar based on the price of gold on the open market which is now selling between \$93 and \$96 per ounce?

[Mr. Murta.]

**Mr. Speaker:** I suggest that this question could be put on the order paper.

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[English]

## AIR TRANSPORT

## REQUEST FOR DIRECT PASSENGER FLIGHT FROM EDMONTON TO OTTAWA

**Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the worthy citizens of Edmonton Centre, I thank you for recognizing me. I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister or to the Minister of Transport. As the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport are listening attentively these days to the needs and wants of the west with a view to curing the west of its so-called discontent, would the Prime Minister or the Minister of Transport use their good offices to give Edmonton at least one direct flight to Ottawa at a reasonable hour?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that suggestion might correct the discontent of the west although probably, if the hon. member used the service too often, it would increase discontent in Ottawa.

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## FINANCE

## ASSESSMENT OF VALUE-ADDED TAX SYSTEM USED BY EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY—EFFECT ON INFLATION

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. What assessment has the minister made of the value-added tax system presently utilized in the European Economic Community and the effect it may have on Canada's inflationary difficulties?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, we are reviewing aspects of this tax, particularly since Great Britain has adopted it and it seems to have general support in the European Common Market. Aside from that, any adoption of that tax would have to be related to a general budgetary statement.

**Mr. MacKay:** With respect, I suggest the minister has not done his homework. I suggest that the tax is not applicable—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member is now debating. He should ask his supplementary question.

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, although the minister has already partially answered my question, may I ask him if he has any immediate plan to study the effects in Canada of such a value-added tax?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, it is being studied.