

Oral Questions

[Translation]

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CANADIAN FEDERATION OF
AGRICULTURE—POSITION OF MINISTER

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Following the publication of the brief submitted by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to the members of the federal cabinet, could the minister say if he intends to implement the recommendations of this brief concerning farm production and, particularly, the statement that government should stop worrying about overproduction and restricting production in that area?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): If I understood the hon. member correctly, Mr. Speaker, I gathered that he was suggesting there be a limitation on feed grain production. I know of no such suggestion by anybody as to the adoption of a limitation on feed grain production.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

INCREASE IN PRICE OF BREAD—REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT
ACT TO PREVENT FURTHER INCREASES

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact there was a 4 per cent increase in the price of bread between February and March, what immediate steps will the minister take to alleviate this situation and to assure that the Canadian Bakery Council will keep prices down?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I will have to check but it seems to me these figures related to the period before the report of the Food Prices Review Board indicating what would be acceptable increases, and as far as I am aware the bakery industry is still acceding to the views of the board in this regard.

Mr. Darling: Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell the House what immediate action he will take to alleviate the high rate of inflation which increased to 10.4 per cent in the last 12 months?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have well set out the constructive action we have taken in the past and have indicated their ability and commitment to similar and other action as the occasion demands.

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AGRICULTURE

INCREASE IN FARM COSTS—ACTION TO CORRECT

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. He may not be

[Mr. McGrath.]

aware of the fact that one of the greatest contributors to rising food prices is the fact that farm input costs have gone up over 20 per cent in the last year. What action does he plan to take to correct these severely rising costs?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think we have recognized the rising input costs in agricultural production. Many of the things used in agricultural production in Canada, including feed grain production, come from other areas of the world, and you have to pay their price or you do not get the product. That is about what it amounts to.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would draw hon. members' attention to the fact that we will soon be reaching the end of the question period. If each member wants to ask one, two or three supplementaries to every question it will be difficult to recognize more than five or six members before the end of the question period. Hon. members should keep that in mind. I will recognize the hon. member for Athabasca and then the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

● (1510)

Mr. Yewchuk: Mr. Speaker, had I received a proper answer to my question it would not have been necessary to ask a supplementary. The minister says he recognizes there is a problem. That is not what I asked him. I asked him what he is going to do about it.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing, I am not going to impose a freeze-thaw-warm-up program like the hon. member's party suggests, because that would only curtail production.

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HOUSING

REQUEST THAT MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES BE REDUCED

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact the cost of housing went up 7.5 per cent last month over that of a year ago, the principal reason given being the increase in interest rates, on which the government can take corrective action, I ask the Minister of Finance whether the government has any intention not only of stopping the escalation in interest rates but also of reducing them?

Mr. McGrath: What about your vote on the housing program?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the hon. gentleman that in a tight housing market such as we face in Canada, particularly in some of the metropolitan areas, subsidization of interest rates such as he suggests would merely result in capitalization of the difference in interest rate against the price of the house, which is what happened in the United Kingdom when they tried the measure the hon. gentleman suggests. I say to him it would not achieve the result that he and I would like to see.