

Oral Questions

on motions. I appreciate fully his point that if a general question is asked it is very difficult to be brief in attempting to reply. Hon. members should bear in mind that when they ask questions that are general in terms it invites the kind of reply the minister has attempted to give. Hon. members might reserve these long questions and debating points until the debate which is to take place this evening. Perhaps at that time the minister might make whatever comments he is trying to make now. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby rises on a point of order.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, my point of order concerns the statement made by the minister. The information I asked for did not require a general statement. I asked whether the minister had obtained certain information from the banks and, if so, whether he would table that information in the House. Surely that requires only a simple yes or no answer.

Mr. Speaker: That is hardly a point of order. I think it would be the consensus of hon. members that we try to go on to the next question. I indicated a while ago that the Chair would recognize the hon. member for Portneuf on a question that is not supplementary. He will be recognized, following which I will return to the hon. members I referred to a moment ago.

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[Translation]

GRAIN**ALLEGED RESALE OF CANADIAN WHEAT BY RUSSIA TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION**

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Since the USSR is reselling to European countries the wheat purchased in Canada, can the minister inform this House what is the resale price of this wheat?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there have been press reports of sales of wheat by Russia, but I have no knowledge of them. There has been no identification of the source of that wheat. It could very well be American wheat.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Can the minister give us the assurance that he will take the necessary steps to ascertain the extent of this traffic?

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, as information becomes available I will be glad to make it available to the hon. member.

[Mr. Speaker.]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES—EFFECT ON RENTS AND COST OF HOUSES—MINISTER'S POSITION ON BANK OF CANADA POLICY**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, having listened to the answers of the Minister of Finance may I ask him whether he is in agreement and accord with the Bank of Canada increasing the bank rate by a whopping half of one per cent to 7½ per cent, the fifth increase in the lending rate since April, putting mortgage rates now between 10 and 12 per cent and making rents impossible to pay for the average man and houses impossible to buy?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is just not correct. In their announcements the banks said they had no present intention of raising the mortgage rate. Therefore the spread between what the banks pay for money and the interest rate they are charging on mortgages has diminished in terms of spread by one per cent. The banks have given me an undertaking there will be no rise in the mortgage rate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: In view of the fact the minister is on record as saying when the monetary policy of the Bank of Canada is in conflict with the monetary policy of the government the government will intervene, does he endorse, as I take it from his answer today, the tight money policy of the Bank of Canada?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would get together with his colleague, the hon. member for Don Valley.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): If an expansion of the money supply by 15 per cent and an expansion of bank loans by 24 per cent is tight money, I wish they would reconcile the two definitions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Don Valley rises on a point of order.

Mr. Gillies: As usual, the Minister of Finance has completely misinterpreted our position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gillies: The point I made, and this was quite clear in my first question, is that a policy of raising interest rates and increasing the money supply at the same time is highly inflationary and will not work to solve the inflation problems in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: That is debate rather than a point of order. The hon. member for Calgary North has a supplementary.