

Oral Questions

er or not the federal government decided to do away with the 5-cent a quart subsidy at the request of the provinces? If so, will he also tell us what provinces?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, for I was not involved directly in the matter, the provincial Ministers of Agriculture all agreed, unless I am mistaken, with the federal Minister of Agriculture to recommend that the subsidy be discontinued for a while. As a result of that recommendation, we decided to do so, which was our policy, but, I stress it again, with which the provincial ministers agreed. Later on, I believe the provincial premiers changed the position taken by their Ministers of Agriculture, but the provinces changed their minds and not the federal government.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. As that policy has done much good, especially to low-income families, can the Prime Minister tell us whether the government is considering the possibility of maintaining or reinstating that policy which is truly beneficial to families?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will recall the early part of the question period, he will see that I answered a similar question very briefly by referring the hon. member to previous answers. The hon. member will then see, through those answers, that the main thing is that we are keeping the subsidy on powdered milk precisely to help the needy families.

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[English]

FINANCE**EXPANSION OF CONSUMER CREDIT—RELATIONSHIP TO INFLATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Given the fact that the consumer and mortgage debt in Canada today is at the 90 per cent level with respect to consumer disposable income—and to put the question in perspective, in 1929 the figure was 45 per cent—is the government concerned about this extension of debt and will they bring some action to limit the expansion of consumer credit?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, with a potential for a slackening demand in the next fiscal year, that might not be the appropriate policy, but I will go into that in more detail in the budget.

Mr. Gillies: Is it the position of the government that this incredible expansion of debt has had any relation to the record levels of inflation that we are having in the country now?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): The inter-relationship between those phenomena is a little more complicated than the question would imply.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

FISHERIES**REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT AID TO INDUSTRY—POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAM**

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Fisheries). In view of the fact that the fishing industry, especially in eastern Canada, is going through an extremely difficult period because of the markets and because of over fishing on the part of foreign fishing fleets as well as other factors, can the minister tell the House what initiatives will be taken by the government to help the industry? I realize that there is a form of subsidy now for surplus stocks, but does the government intend to take any new initiatives to help the fishing industry over this rather difficult period?

Hon. Romeo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): I wish to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his question. I hope that after having solved some of the detailed problems I will be able to provide some more information next week of a positive nature.

Mr. Carter: Does the government intend to introduce an income support policy for fishermen because the present Unemployment Insurance Act discriminates against fishermen and contains many inequities? Without some kind of an income support policy it is quite possible that the industry could fail.

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): It is our intention to introduce an income support program. However, the more I work on this with my officials the more I realize why since 1970 successive ministers and officials have been fighting with this problem. It is an extremely complicated area because of the variety of fishing operations and differences on both coasts.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY**UNITED AIRCRAFT—SUGGESTED PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS CONCERNING SUBSIDIES**

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

United Aircraft of Canada Limited is appearing before a parliamentary commission in Quebec, where they tabled several documents. However, the legal advisor representing this company said yesterday that he could not table documents concerning subsidies for several million dollars coming from the federal government, claiming he had not got permission to do so from the latter.

Would the hon. Minister be prepared, for the good of this inquiry and for the settlement of the dispute, to recommend United Aircraft to table these documents and, in the affirmative, could he invite the company to do so as soon as possible?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): No, Mr. Speaker.