

Oral Questions

• (1420)

Mr. Grier: Will the minister indicate to the House whether the bureau in his department to monitor whether tax cut savings are being passed on to consumers is now functioning and, if not, when it is expected to be?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I said in the House yesterday that we were developing methods of ascertaining the effect of the tax cuts announced in the budget on prices of the goods in question. I am not yet in a position to give further information to the House on this matter.

Mr. Grier: In view of the fact that some details as to this bureau are already in the public domain, as reported in one Toronto paper yesterday, can the minister inform the House as to the bureau's proposed terms of reference, what steps will be taken to publicize violations, and what administrative or legislative action is contemplated by the minister to deal with violations?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that the press report in question appears to be based on some misunderstanding of the information the reporter in question was given. Therefore I do not think a further reply by me to the hon. member's question would be relevant.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

POSSIBLE USE OF WAR MEASURES ACT TO ESTABLISH PRICE AND WAGE CONTROLS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to that asked by my leader. I wish to ask the Minister of Justice if either he or his officials have been asked for or have given any advice, orally or in writing, with regard to use of the War Measures Act as a means of establishing controls on incomes and wages and prices?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): No, Mr. Speaker.

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[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

NEW QUEBEC—ALLEGED POISONING OF CERTAIN INDIANS BY MERCURY CONTAMINATED FISH—REQUEST THAT MINISTER CONSULT WITH PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Can he tell us if he has communicated with the Quebec authorities to find out the circumstances surrounding the death of one Indian and the sickness of several others recently in New Quebec?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what incident the hon. member is referring to, but I will inquire and report to him and to the House tomorrow or the following day.

[Mr. Gray.]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the hon. Minister of the Environment. Could he inquire, at the same time as his colleague from Indian Affairs and Northern Development, with the Quebec authorities involved to find out if the poisoning of this person was due to fish poisoned by mercury?

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[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

STEEL PRICE INCREASES—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that, according to the Steel Company of Canada, steel prices will rise on April 2 by \$6 a ton, the third increase in six months, is the minister prepared to investigate this price rise to determine if it is really justified?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, to the extent that the report in question may have some relevance to the existing combines law, I am certainly happy to draw this fact to the attention of the officials who administer that law.

Mr. Blenkarn: The industry is saying that the real reason for the price increase is the rise in scrap metal prices.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should ask his question.

Mr. Blenkarn: Will the minister investigate scrap metal prices to determine if that is the true cause?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I will draw this further comment of the hon. member to the attention of the officials administering the Combines Investigation Act.

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FINANCE

TARIFF AND SALES TAX REDUCTIONS—MONITORING SYSTEM TO ENSURE CONSUMERS GET BENEFIT

Mr. Ron Atkey (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. On February 27, over a month ago, the minister indicated to me in the House that the government was setting up a monitoring system to ensure that tariff and sales tax reductions in the budget would be passed on to consumers. Would the minister tell the House whether the monitoring system to which he was referring is the same as the one to which the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has referred and, if so, can he give us more information than the other minister was prepared to give us today?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): The monitoring system to which my colleague referred is the monitoring system to which I referred.