

Oral Questions

Mr. Mazankowski: I appreciate the answer of the minister. However, the diplomatic exchange method seems to have failed. Is the Canadian government now considering ways and means to beef up the Canadian arsenal in support of Air Canada in this very important matter?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to acknowledge that efforts have failed. I told the House some time ago, in response to a question by the right hon. member for Prince Albert, that representations had been made at the highest level and that I had obtained an interim response from the foreign secretary, Mr. Owen, which did not slam the door, in effect. It indicated that further negotiations and discussions were going to take place. I hope I will have an opportunity to talk to Mr. Owen in New York when we proceed there for the Namibia talks over the weekend and that I can, indeed, keep this matter under negotiation. In that context, it certainly has not been a total rejection or even a partial rejection of the Canadian representations to this point in time.

* * *

CONSUMER AFFAIRS**INCREASE IN PRICE OF BREAD—EXPLANATION THEREFOR**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs I will direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. It concerns the CPI increase of 13 per cent in the price of bread over the last few months.

A letter we have from the minister of consumer affairs states that the price of flour is up by 25 per cent. When the wheat subsidy was taken off bread, which amounted to about 3.2 cents per loaf, the price of a loaf of bread went up by seven cents. The subsidy on flour was 22 cents for 5½ pounds. The price went up by 44 cents. Can the minister explain why the market at the retail level went up twice as high as the actual increase in the cost of the raw material, which was flour?

[*Translation*]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): No, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I am almost speechless. This is the first time we have had an honest answer and a short answer from the Minister of Agriculture. He has lost his bull.

In view of the tremendous increase in the price of bread and flour in this country, will the minister try to persuade the cabinet to inquire why the retail price has gone up so much when the price of the raw material was much lower? At the same time, will he try to persuade the cabinet to reinstate the subsidy on bread, milk and flour, which commodities are so vital to Canadians?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I would say, even before the day that tomorrow is going to be, maybe we can have the little people help us, because the hon. member certainly is not

[Mr. Jamieson.]

helping us. We should have full information on this. The hon. member wants a simple answer to a very detailed question. We know, for example, that if we give our wheat away it will only lower the price of a 32-ounce loaf of bread by 11 cents. All the other costs involved are in relation to production, transportation, distribution and so forth.

● (1150)

We do not hear very much about waste, but I am told that in the large metropolitan Toronto area, well over 100,000 loaves of bread which are not consumed and which become stale are thrown away. They go into either incinerators or the garbage. That is part of the cost involved. If the hon. member wants a more detailed answer, there is enough information that I could go on even until tomorrow.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY**METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY SECURITY SERVICE**

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Solicitor General I will direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. As a result of a specific government direction in 1969, certain political groups, including the Parti Québécois and others, became the objects of security service investigation. The first report as a result of that investigation which identified these groups and described them in some detail was described by the Prime Minister as, and I quote, "a damn good piece of work".

Given that specific direction, given government knowledge as to which groups were involved and their nature, did no solicitor general, minister of justice, prime minister or any member of the cabinet committee on security and intelligence ever ask the security service what methods and procedures it was using to fulfil the mandate the government had given it?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I cannot really answer the latter part of the question because I do not agree with the premise of the question.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Deputy Prime Minister does not agree with sworn testimony before a royal commission established by the government. Giving the benefit of any doubt as to lack of government knowledge—and one would give the benefit of that doubt only because of a series of incompetent solicitors general—what is government policy with respect to senior public servants and their continued employment when such public servants withhold deliberately vital information from the ministers to whom they are responsible?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, more than once in the House the Prime Minister and I have had occasion to express the opinion that it is unwise at this stage to comment upon sworn testimony, even before the McDonald commission. The last time we debated this question we spent a day debating the testimony of a particular witness whose testimony had not even