

Inquiries of the Ministry

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, the motive behind this bill is to make the remembrance of World War II and other wars more relevant to our society today, 24 years after World War II. It is designed to enhance the sanctity of the occasion for those who served and those who were bereaved. Equally important, it is designed to manifest some compassion to our former enemies, more particularly those who are now in Canada, and even more particularly to their children who sometimes grow up in our society with a feeling of guilt about the role their parents played in past wars.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INTEREST RATE ON LONG-TERM OBLIGATIONS —ROLE OF PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): My question, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Minister of Finance. Does the continued increase in interest rates as reflected by this week's rise to 7.85 per cent on government long-term obligations in the face of the government's monetary restraints indicate that any changes in these restraints or other measures taken by the government in combating inflation will have to be reviewed if we are to see a ceiling or some sort of control imposed on interest rates?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): As my hon. friend knows, Mr. Speaker, our policies in this regard are continually under review.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Does the statement by the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission made yesterday in a speech for delivery in Montreal, indicating a study by the commission of specific price increases, mean that the commission will assume the role of a prices review board? Does this indicate a change in the government's thinking with regard to the role of the Prices and Incomes Commission?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker; as I have stated many times, the commission is acting on the authority it has received from Parliament.

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Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. There has been an indication by the commission of a purely voluntary approach and that it would not conduct a study into specific prices as though it were a review board. However, the statement yesterday does make that suggestion.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, because the commission is independent from the government it is using various ways and approaches to control inflation. It may be that the statement to which the hon. member is referring, of which I have no knowledge, indicates a change of tactics or strategy by the commission. The hon. member asked if it indicated a change in the government's approach, and my answer is no. We consider the commission to be acting under its own steam.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): A supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister say when hon. members will be able to find out whether a prices review board will be constituted?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. I am not in a position to say when.

GRAIN

FLAX—REPORTED LACK OF SUPPLIES FOR EXPORT

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatoon-Humboldt. In view of reports that supplies of flax for export were not available at the Lakehead during the October to November shipping period, can the minister assure the House that steps have been taken to ensure that supplies will immediately be moved into position at the Lakehead?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I believe I indicated to the House on a previous occasion that the Wheat Board has given high priority to the movement of flax into position and that on the basis of information I had, flax was flowing to meet the demand there.

Mr. Gleave: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wish to ask the Minister without Portfolio if the chain of responsibility of the companies concerned, other than permission by the Wheat Board, has been clearly established?

Mr. Lang: I am not sure I understand the real import of that question, Mr. Speaker.