

the country, I would think that the response will be given on budget night.

**Mr. Broadbent:** A supplementary question just to be perfectly clear on what the minister is saying. Is it the government's intention to do nothing to create jobs, in addition to whatever programs they may now have, before the minister brings in a budget some time in the month of May?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman would have to wait for the budget. In the meantime, he ought to review the stimulus already in the economy as a result of the November 18 budget.

**Mr. Speaker:** A final supplementary, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

POSSIBLE MEASURES TO INCREASE SUPPLY OF HOUSING  
PRIOR TO BUDGET—SUGGESTED REDUCTION IN MORTGAGE  
INTEREST RATE

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, the one sector of the economy that does create a lot of jobs and meets a human need is housing but there has been a decline in starts of some 49 per cent in January, a decline of 44 per cent in February and when the figures are available for March I am sure there will be an equivalent decline. May I ask the minister if the government intends to do anything about increasing the supply of housing prior to introduction of the budget?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, obviously a budget will have to bear in mind the priority that the hon. gentleman suggests, both in economic and social terms. He should not overlook the fact, however, that pursuant to recent amendments in the National Housing Act passed by this parliament new measures are already contemporaneously being introduced by my colleague the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

**Mr. Broadbent:** A final supplementary for the Minister of Finance. In view of the changes that have just been made in NHA regulations which will now permit Canadians to borrow up to \$50,000 if they are buying a house, which with existing interest rates will put people in debt perhaps to the tune of over \$100,000 over a period of time, does the minister have any plans to take action on mortgage rates so that the cost of living on a monthly basis for those who will be buying houses will be substantially reduced?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** In general terms, no, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. gentleman again ought not to overlook the Assisted Home Ownership Program which in effect subsidizes interest rates on lower priced houses.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

EFFECT OF LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE ON SUPPLY OF FEED  
GRAIN—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Since Quebec millers no longer have access to port facilities to get some feed grain and as they continue to send us telegrams of distress, being unable to provide feed grain to their customers, as is the case for example of the Meunerie coopérative of Parisville, I would like to ask the minister whether he will make a statement in the House this afternoon to announce what contingency measures he intends to take to provide feed grain to Quebec mills, in accordance with the assurance he gave in the House yesterday?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, according to information I have received today most people still have some stocks of grain and there is no real loss of feed stocks. That is, no livestock or poultry are going without feed. We are watching the situation very closely and moving as much as we possibly can by all means, as I have said. I will not be making a statement later today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question.

By his reply, does the Minister of Agriculture suggest that he will wait to act till some livestock losses are incurred as a result of shortage of feed grain in eastern Canada, since stocks are now barely sufficient for three days in the Quebec City area?

[English]

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Speaker, there will be no loss if we can make sure deliveries are made. We have stocks for several days—in some cases for three or four days and in some cases much longer—so we are watching the situation very closely to make sure there is no loss of livestock or poultry.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a last supplementary.

I understand the Minister of Agriculture means that there is enough feed grain in the Quebec area. I agree with him. This grain must be forwarded to mills. What measures does the minister intend to take to ensure the grain will reach mills, then producers?

● (1420)

[English]

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware of the grains that are available in the elevators, in the feed mills, and at the sources which are supplying feeds to the farmers. As I said, we are watching the situation and keeping on top of it as well as we can.