

Oral Questions

prepared to make a statement one way or another. I am sure the right hon. gentleman knows that the producers of grain do not want an increase in tariff. All the elevator operators, pools, and so on, are more or less in favour because they need a realistic economic operating picture to present. It is too early for me to say what we will do. I want him to know, and I am sure he does know, that I have the concern of all concerned.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, anybody who has the concern of all concerned has concern for nobody.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I ask him this simple question. Not endeavouring to foretell what the commission will recommend, obviously there will be an increase: the grain companies want it, the pools want it, and so on. If there is an increase, as there will be, it will hit the western farmer to the extent of six cents a bushel. Will this be taken up by the Government of Canada, rather than adding to the burden already suffered by the farmers as a result of the high cost of production and rising costs in connection with their needs? Will the Government of Canada take this up as part of its responsibility and ensure fair markets for western wheat?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. member is suggesting that we should give this matter serious consideration. Anything he suggests always receives serious consideration from this minister.

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● (1432)

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS RESPECTING FUTURE BORROWINGS

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister. As the lack of confidence in the government's economic record continues to be reflected in Canada with a Conference Board survey showing that 73 per cent of Canadians feel the government is doing poorly in running the economy while our dollar continues to scrape near bottom in New York—it was down again today, with a further loss of tens of millions of dollars—will the Prime Minister tell us when the government intends to place further foreign debt, as they just completed the issue for \$750 million on April 1?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think you will recognize that the question is obviously on the subject of the debate which begins tonight.

Mr. Stevens: Again to the Prime Minister, who obviously did not hear my question because it has nothing to do with the budget debate tonight. But since in the Prime Minister's mind the budget debate tonight is linked very much with the issues the government indicates it may be making at some later date in New York, would the Prime Minister indicate whether

[Mr. Whelan.]

reports from Washington are correct, that the main reason the government is bringing in a budget tonight is that they have been told that without showing the current fiscal position for the country they may not raise further money in New York; they may not file a prospectus without showing the budgetary position which will be revealed tonight?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member asks two questions on monetary policy and then says they have nothing to do with the budget debate tonight. I will give him the answer to those questions if he will undertake that his party is not going to discuss monetary policy during the budget debate, which is a ludicrous proposition.

Mr. Stevens: My supplementary is addressed to the Prime Minister. I shall word it very simply. Was a contributing reason to the timing of the budget tonight the fact that the information which will be revealed tonight concerning Canada's fiscal year 1979 is needed to be included in a prospectus to be later filed in Washington?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, an answer and a comment. The answer is a flat no. The comment is that the Conservatives add very little credibility to their own policies when they themselves have been pressing for a debate and then they do not think we are going to give a debate because they asked for it, which seems to be very ridiculous.

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FISHERIES

ASSISTANCE TO FISHERMEN IN MODERNIZING VESSELS AND EQUIPMENT

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, my question was intended for the Minister of Fisheries, but in his absence I shall direct it to the Prime Minister: it has to do with the ports policy announced by the Minister of Fisheries last Thursday. At that time the minister stated that something like 58 per cent of the catch of all species within the 200-mile limit was presently taken by Canadian fishermen.

How can the government justify giving away 42 per cent of the catch as being surplus to the catching capacity of Canadian fishermen? What steps is he taking to help Canadian fishermen modernize their vessels and equipment, as was recommended to him by the premiers and ministers of fisheries from Atlantic Canada when they met with him at the federal-provincial conference in February? To save asking a supplementary, I should also like to know what steps are being taken to help Canadian processing plants to expand and diversify their operations in order that they may process presently underutilized species in Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): The hon. member is no doubt aware that through various international organizations and treaties we have signed, and in discussions which have taken place on the Law of the Sea, the Canadian government,