

Oral Questions

principal responsibility. If there are allegations of misconduct such as the hon. member may be suggesting, I know of nothing beyond the press reports of the matter. Certainly the responsibility and initiative rests with the provincial attorney general as far as enforcement of the Criminal Code is concerned.

SUGGESTED INVESTIGATION OF REASON FOR HIGH RATE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, ONTARIO AND ALBERTA

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Justice. In view of the incident brought to light today of the 15 year old girl in Niagara Falls and the 1973 statistics which show that 43,201 abortions were performed last year, the highest number ever, and because the law specifies that abortions are permitted when the life or health of the mother is endangered, may I ask if the minister has investigated why the abortion rate is the highest by far in the three wealthiest provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, some work is under way in an attempt to determine the manner in which hospital committees are operating in various provinces and these in particular. Of course, here again I would indicate there is a prime responsibility on the provincial attorney general to see if the Criminal Code is being followed.

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FINANCE

SUGGESTED DEPOSIT OF PART OF GOVERNMENT CASH BALANCE WITH COMPANIES PROVIDING MORTGAGES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Now that the government has some \$5 billion on deposit with the Bank of Canada and Canadian Chartered banks—money that was sopped up in part from moneys on deposit with institutions that specialize in mortgage lending activity—and in view of the fact that the money was won through an excessively high coupon rate on the last Canada Savings Bond issue, would the minister consider redepositing for a suitable term some portion of the new-found cash with companies active in the mortgage lending field so that mortgage funds will become more available and not more costly?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, without accepting the full ambit of the two preambles of the hon. gentleman, the high cash balances of the government now pose a different set of debt management problems. One was satisfied to a certain extent by lowering the secondary reserve ratios of chartered banks to 7 per cent and bonds released to the Central banks were released to inject a certain amount of liquidity in the banking system to make up some of the problem the hon. member was describing. We will have this in mind, but the hon. gentleman's particular suggestion does not commend itself.

[Mr. Lang.]

GRAIN

LAG IN DELIVERIES OF WHEAT—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO CATCH UP

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice in charge of the Wheat Board. Has the Wheat Board made a final determination on how far behind it is in delivering commitments for grain and when, if ever, it can catch up and has an attempt been made to find a formula to enable it to catch up?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the Wheat Board has been examining the question of how much additional grain will be moved by rail during the course of the winter so that commitments out of eastern destinations may be met as quickly as possible. I do not have any detailed analysis of how far behind we are in regard to any particular shipments but I will be glad to ask the Canadian Wheat Board for a full report.

Mr. Korchinski: A supplementary question. May I ask whether a combination of strikes plus some grain that has moved into the open market makes it impossible for the Wheat Board to determine what we have on hand and thus the Wheat Board is not making sales since it is keeping its price at something like \$1.40 above the Chicago price presently being received?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the present position of the Canadian Wheat Board in not making sales in an urgent way is to assess the situation in regard to delivery of grain and quality of grain and to make such adjustments in the program as are required. A major reason for not doing additional selling at the present time is that the forward selling program of the Wheat Board earlier was so vigorous that very large commitments have already been made in terms of sales.

Mr. Jelinek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Since yesterday's question period I have tried to get in touch with the Minister of Labour on numerous occasions yesterday and today, but I only got as far as his secretary, I believe. In dealing with some of the evidence of the SIU, Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity, because I did not get the opportunity to see the minister for one reason or another, to tell him that because of the fact that the board of referees of the Unemployment Insurance Commission granted—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure that if the hon. member has information to communicate to the Minister of Labour he has had the opportunity in the last hour to take a few steps across the floor to where the hon. Minister has been sitting. I do not think that the hon. member ought to be able to take the time of the House to make that sort of complaint.

● (1520)

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I think what the hon. member said should be contested. After the question period yesterday my office was in touch with his office, to obtain the material he had. There was no answer. My special assistant, Gordon McCaffrey, sent a messenger to the hon.