

government. One is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who is responsible for the setting up of a special committee of the House to study the trends in food prices and to determine ways and means whereby the consumer would not have to pay exorbitant prices. In other words, they would put a lid on the prices so far as possible. If they could not peg the prices, perhaps they could stop prices from rising so quickly. The minister studied this matter because consumers across the nation were demanding that such action be taken. Consumers felt that in some instances they were paying exorbitant prices for food, which indeed they were. So the government set up a special committee to look into food prices.

Then, we have another minister, the Minister of Agriculture, saying that the committee will not achieve anything and that he can tell us what the result will be after the hearings are over. He believes the price of food will continue to rise. He said in speeches—and I think I quote him fairly—that farmers were not receiving enough for their produce. In many instances, I agree with that statement. On the other hand, he said that consumers in this country are receiving a bargain in food. This is what is upsetting members of the food prices committee. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot have two ministers of the government stating directly opposite views if we are to accomplish anything, because all that does is to create confusion. I, and I think most members of the House from all parties who have any connection with the agriculture industry, want to see the family farm and those engaged in farming obtaining a return for their investment and labour comparable to that of other segments of the economy. The minister said that farmers want a fair shake, and I agree with this. There is no argument there. That is what the farmers of this country want. They want to be able to promote and develop a business on a sound footing which will provide a living for themselves comparable to that of others with equal investment.

We are dealing with the prices of food, and this leads me right into something else concerning farmers. We are studying the price of food, and that is the concern of producers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers. I think we should study the price of food as a concern of the government. I would point out the taxes which farmers have to pay now, since the new tax system destroys many of the tax benefits which farmers have been able to utilize through the years and which made it possible to pass on a farm from one generation to the next. This policy will destroy many farmers in the country. These additional expenses must be passed on to the consumer because there is nobody else to pay them.

Then, there are government regulations regarding packaging and distribution, and there are tariffs and taxes. I think we should study what government interference has actually done to the cost of food in Canada today. But we will never be able to do that because the people concerned will not be called in front of the committee. However, we will be digging to see how much the retailers make, how much the wholesalers make, and we will be dealing with how much the producers did not make. Anyone who has had anything to do with agriculture could have told you that this was what would happen before we ever sat on the committee. So, I think we should take a new tack.

Bank of Canada Act

The Chairman: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but it being five o'clock, it is my duty to rise, report progress and request leave to consider the bill again later this day.

Progress reported.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight)—Agriculture—Increase in Price of Fertilizer—Inquiry as to action; the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan)—Agriculture—Feed Grain—Suggested assistance respecting protein supplement; the hon. member for Meadow Lake (Mr. Nesdoly)—Grain—Provision of railway cars to points with large supplies of non board grains.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, private bills, notices of motions.

• (1700)

[Translation]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

BANK OF CANADA ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING LONG-TERM LOANS OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

On the order: Public Bills:

January 15, 1973—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs of Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Bank of Canada Act.—Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue.)

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, at the request of the hon. member for Témiscamingue, and with the unanimous consent of the House, I should like to move second reading of Bill C-14, seconded by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the House agree to allow the hon. member for Shefford to move second reading of the bill on behalf of the hon. member for Témiscamingue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I think that Bill C-14 is one of the most important bills ever introduced in the House because it would improve the whole financial structure