

Oral Questions

think, though, that I can accept the preamble to the hon. gentleman's question when he says that these guidelines have proved to be ineffective. They have not yet proved to be ineffective.

An hon. Member: And not effective either.

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FOOD PRICES**POSSIBILITY OF ACTION TO CONTROL PERCENTAGE MARK-UP TECHNIQUE OF FOOD CHAINS**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Considering that a study, reported at length recently in the *Montreal Gazette*, revealed that the 19 per cent increase in food costs during the past year is likely to be continued throughout 1974, and that a good part of this inflation in food costs is due to the percentage mark-up technique of the food chains, will the minister inform the House if his department is taking steps to eliminate or control this pricing technique in a serious way?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to see that article yet. I will look at it and get back to the hon. member.

POSSIBILITY OF REDUCTION IN AMOUNT SPENT ON ADVERTISING ALLOWED CORPORATIONS FOR TAX PURPOSES OR EXCESS PROFITS TAX

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I see nothing has changed over the New Year period. I will switch to the Minister of Finance. In light of the fact that the same study revealed that advertising costs in food also account for a substantial part of the increase in the cost of food, amounting, for example, to some 43 per cent on Ajax cleanser and 18 per cent on Palmolive soap and so on, will the minister inform the House if the government intends to reduce substantially or remove entirely the amount that corporations can claim for tax purposes of revenues spent on advertising?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): No, sir, the government does not intend to do so. As to a further review of that study, my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, will be looking into it in a deeper way. I might say to the hon. gentleman, however, that there is nothing in the study that precludes in any way, in answer to the assertion that advertising adds to costs, the argument that the wide proclaiming that goods are in competition with other goods may contribute to lower costs.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the minister read the study again. Considering that the profits of the food chains, also revealed in that study, were substantially above other sectors of the Canadian economy in the past year, would the minister inform the House if he is considering an excess profits tax to be particularly applicable to that sector of the economy?

[Mr. Gillespie.]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): No, Mr. Speaker, and if I were this would not be the time to announce it.

[Translation]

TRANSPORT**MEASURES TO KEEP ST. LAWRENCE RIVER FREE OF ICE THIS WINTER TO ACHIEVE LOWER OIL PRICES**

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport.

Did he receive a request from the St. Lawrence Pilots Federation for extending the navigation season of the St. Lawrence River during this winter in order to achieve lower oil prices and, if so, what policy does the minister intend to follow in this respect?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I received a telegram on this matter.

Mr. Matte: In the second part of my question I asked, Mr. Speaker, what policy the minister intends to follow in this respect?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, the technicians from my department are not convinced of the validity of the pilots association's claim.

[English]

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ACT TO IMPROVE SAFETY OF RAILWAY OPERATIONS

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Transport. Now that the Canadian Transport Commission has finally taken action with regard to rail safety, even though it is negative action and years late, will the minister take positive steps not only to improve the safety record of Canada's railways but to allow them to take advantage of existing technology to better serve the people of Canada?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there is equality in this chamber. I received this report at the same time as the hon. gentleman. I am anxious to read it and after that I may have some comments.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. I should like to ask the minister whether action is now being taken or is contemplated to change the uniforms and insignia of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): No, Mr. Speaker, no action has been taken to change the insignia or uniforms of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Does the minister say that no consideration is being given to this question and, in particular, to