

will the minister tell us what this means, those ordinary Canadians who cannot tell just exactly what it means, on the one hand, not to minimize something and, on the other hand, not to exaggerate it, in view of the severe consequences that may be felt by the Canadian people unless the government launches precautionary moves?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has quoted me correctly. I want to say to him that until the facts become clearer it would be premature to change the stance of the economic policy of the government. I want to suggest to him, in terms he might find un-Canadian, that I would prefer to base policy on facts when those facts are known.

● (1450)

GOVERNMENT STEPS TO OFFSET INCREASING PRICES OF CONSUMER COMMODITIES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact the wholesale price of sugar in Canada has doubled in the past month and this will be passed on in the form of considerably increased retail prices, and in view of the effect this will have on the cost of food in Canada which is already largely influenced by the energy situation, I ask the minister what steps the government proposes to take to offset these increase factors relative to the cost of food in Canada which is already running at the rate of increase of 18 per cent per year.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is aware of the earlier Tariff Board decision on sugar and its refining in Canada. I am reanalysing that decision in view of the present price structure.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT INTRODUCE POLICY ON SUGAR

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Agriculture, by way of a supplementary question, whether, in view of the very serious situation regarding the sugar market and the effect this will have on the cost of living in Canada, he is now prepared, after two years, to bring in his sugar policy?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, my sugar policy is not two years delayed; and by the time the two years are up you can be sure we will have a new sugar beet industry and a new sugar refining industry in western Ontario and a policy for all of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will see the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby on a supplementary, and then the hon. member for South Shore.

Oral Questions

INDUSTRY

SURVEY OF COMPANIES ON CONSEQUENCES OF ENERGY CRISIS—PUBLICATION OF FINDINGS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Two weeks ago the minister indicated that his department was conducting a survey of over 1,000 corporations with respect to the effects of the energy crisis. Is the minister now prepared to inform the House of the results of his department's analysis of the data thus obtained, and also is he prepared to table that information for the benefit of the House?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned on that occasion, this study is a form of continuing review and analysis. It is also a form of contingency planning. I do not plan to table any over-all statement on this analysis before the House rises.

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ENERGY

GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR OVERLAND MOVEMENT OF OIL FOLLOWING CLOSING OF SEAWAY—REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that the Lake Ontario section of the St. Lawrence Seaway will officially close on December 20, is the minister prepared at this time to announce any specific government actions and programs relating to overland movement of oil now moving through the seaway by tankers?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have already stated to the House that the seaway will close on December 20. It is not possible to postpone its closing. At the same time, we are preparing to move oil by train and truck.

Mr. Crouse: In view of the special dependency of the people of Atlantic Canada and Quebec on oil now moving through the St. Lawrence Seaway, can the minister give his assurance that the overland movement of oil will be in place by December 20?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): The problem is as follows, Mr. Speaker. Everything must be ready to meet the needs of eastern Canada as soon as they will be felt.

● (1500)

[English]

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Has he completed an assessment of the need for an overland oil transportation system and, if so, what specific new programs will he be implementing to assure the movement of oil by this route?