

and the Premier of Saskatchewan concerning federal development assistance to the province.

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● (1200)

INDUSTRIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION

TABLING OF REPORT ON GRAIN HANDLING INDUSTRY IN VANCOUVER

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table copies of the report of the Industrial Inquiry Commission, established pursuant to part V of the Canada Labour Code, to inquire into the grain handling industry in the Vancouver port area.

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[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENT TO LEGALIZE OFF-TRACK BETTING

Mr. Fernand E. Leblanc (Laurier) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-419, entitled "An Act to amend the Criminal Code (off-track betting)".

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Leblanc (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, my main, essential and urgent purpose in introducing this bill for the third time since 1967 is to provide the province of Quebec, without any disbursement on the part of the federal government, therefore from the taxpayers of the ten provinces, a new source of income to finance the deficit of the Olympics. Moreover, the bill would strike a severe blow to the Canadian and international underworld by removing the illegality of off-track betting. Finally, all provinces could benefit, if they so wished, of such an amendment to the Criminal Code.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I understand that after I left the House yesterday, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) said he intended to raise a question of privilege because he said I had misled the House. I wish to say, as briefly as I can, that in my answer to the hon. member I did not promise to give him any information. However, whenever I have promised hon. members that we would check our records, we have followed it up as quickly as possible. In all instances we have done this. But I cannot report upon something until it has been determined. I did say to the hon. member yesterday that I would inform him, and that anything we were doing was public information, as far as I was concerned.

I did meet with the National Farm Products Marketing Council on Tuesday, November 25, and I did ask the council to report back to me after its consideration of the change in egg prices. Although I have not received a written reply from the council, I am pleased to report to the House that the review officers of the council, who automatically monitor the cost-price factor formula,

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advised me by telephone that they were satisfied a price increase was justified for some time prior to its actual implementation, but following the pricing formula they use, this price can fluctuate either up or down. As was pointed out earlier today in the House, the price of eggs is down one cent a dozen as of this morning. That is because of input costs, and that formula is being followed properly.

The formula is available for anyone to scrutinize at any time. It is stricter than we are imposing on anybody else under the anti-inflation program, and has been in force since last July. I do not know if the hon. member meant to do what he did, but he has created an incorrect impression by the very fact that he is reported in the press today as saying that "Whelan misled the House". As far as I am concerned, if there is anything I am not guilty of, it is of trying to mislead the House on anything.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: If there is anything going for this minister just a little bit, it is that he is trying to do his damndest to be honest about everything he does.

Some hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, the minister has used the guise of a question of privilege to bootleg a statement into the House which should have been made on motions.

Mr. Blais: What did you do yesterday?

Mr. McGrath: I merely want to say that the record speaks for itself. On November 25 I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) what he was doing about the complaint which had been raised by the Anti-Inflation Board with respect to increases in the price of eggs by CEMA which, in the opinion of the board, could not be justified in light of decreases in the price of feed gain. The minister replied on November 25 as follows:

I am meeting with the Farm Products Marketing Council later this day to discuss that matter.

That was on November 25. Yesterday, in reply to the question I raised, the minister said he was meeting with them and that the meeting was a continuing thing. All I want to show is that the minister made the statement on November 25, that he was meeting with them, and surely it should not have taken him ten days to discuss this matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) raised, as has been appropriately put a disagreement, under the guise of a question of privilege. The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) indicated yesterday his intention to raise a similar kind of question of privilege. In any case, I am sure both hon. members will recognize at once that the matter is one of dispute and disagreement between them and does not fall within the classic definition of a question of privilege.