

Oral Questions

Member refers does not occur. I have already had conversations with the Hon. Member for Athabasca and the Hon. Member for Peace River.

DOMESTIC PRICE OF WHEAT

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board. Since 80 per cent of Canadian wheat is exported, and an increase in the domestic price will offer only inadequate help to farmers, what alternatives to increasing the price of domestic wheat, and as a result the price of bread and pasta, will the Government consider as it endeavours to help wheat farmers?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Government is considering many options. The Hon. Member will know that we have acted already on several. The Minister of Finance removed the tax on farm fuel, and we thank him for that. We have moved to limit transportation cost increases.

I am aware of the concerns that the Hon. Member has concerning jobs in his own area. He should know that what we are endeavouring to do is to be fair to everyone concerned. In this regard I refer to the consumer as well as to the industry in which there are jobs at stake. Above all, I refer to the producers who are being hurt by what I think is unfair competition from outside our borders and over which we have no control. I understand the situation in the Hon. Member's riding. We are cognizant of his concerns.

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PENITENTIARIES

ESCAPE OF FIVE INMATES FROM LAVAL PENITENTIARY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. First, I would like to congratulate him on his appointment and offer the constructive co-operation of the Opposition—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nunziata: —to remedy some of the serious problems facing his Ministry.

It is a strange coincidence and a strange irony indeed that we are here today to deal with the issue of keeping inmates in jail when five dangerous inmates were allowed to escape from Laval Penitentiary due to gross negligence. Is the Solicitor General in a position today to explain to the people of Canada how it was possible for these five dangerous inmates to literally go under the wall at Laval?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his good wishes. I

certainly look forward to his co-operation with respect to the operation of my Ministry. There is an old saying, but I will not use it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kelleher: Needless to say I am aware of the escape which occurred at Laval. An internal investigation is presently being conducted. When I receive the report I will decide on what further action, if any, should be taken.

REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that an internal investigation is not enough. What is necessary is an external, independent and thorough investigation into the escape in order to assure Canadians of the security of our institutions. Will the Solicitor General immediately call for an independent inquiry into the escape in order to assure Canadians of the security of all federal penitentiaries?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Hon. Member, all Members of the House and, indeed, all Canadians that I am concerned about the security of our institutions. Starting next week I will be undertaking a tour of the various penitentiaries and federal institutions. The first one I will visit is Laval, where I will be on Tuesday.

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PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

PRICE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. As the Minister knows, Canadians want to know how much more they can expect to pay for prescription drugs once the Government brings forward its proposal to amend the Patent Act with respect to generic drugs. Will the Minister instruct his departmental officials to release immediately all studies and information which they have with respect to projected price increases for prescription drugs once the Government brings forward this measure?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member wants the best health care system but he does not want to produce it in Canada. He wants to buy the best drugs from outside Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): The present Act has not allowed us to develop new drugs in Canada. The evidence is in that regard. In fact the Hon. Member knows this as well as anyone else knows it. If we look back to insulin some 50 years ago we will see that that is the Canadian record in almost all cases in