

terms of Standing Order 43, seconded by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom):

That this House instruct the government to take immediate steps to force a bread price roll-back to the limits recommended by the Food Prices Review Board, and to the extent that new legislation is required to empower the government to so act, to introduce such legislation immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

INCREASES IN PRICE OF BREAD—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs arising out of his statement yesterday about the message from the Bakery Council of Canada indicating that general restraint would be exercised for the month of March. In view of the opposition of the Food Prices Review Board that an increase in the price of bread of more than two or three cents would be excessive, and the reports that some bakeries at least have put their prices up by four cents, would the minister tell the House what action, if any, he proposes to take?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that most, if not all, of the bakeries, with one possible exception, which are the subject of these press reports are not members of the Bakery Council. I am taking steps to contact them today, and I hope to have further information to report to the House tomorrow.

Mr. Stanfield: I think the minister conceded with respect to the position of those outside the council or association that there was at least one bakery to his knowledge that had gone above the two or three cent level indicated as the maximum appropriate. What action, if any, does the minister intend to take with respect to any such bakery?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, first we want to contact this bakery directly and find out exactly what it is doing so that we will have exact knowledge rather than relying on press reports. In addition, as I said yesterday, my request to the members of the Bakery Council through the council itself was for voluntary action, and as soon as we get an assessment of how this restraint is operating, which we want on an urgent basis, we will have to consider what further action would be appropriate.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister what action he really proposes to take to confront the problem

Oral Questions

of the increase in the price of bread in view of the impression he has been giving in recent days that he is simply using evasive tactics to permit delays on his part?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, the action I have been taking is within the framework of the statement made by the Prime Minister last August, which involves a three-stage process. First of all, where unwarranted price increases are identified it is expected that they will be made public by the Food Prices Review Board and given widespread publicity; second, the principals of the enterprise involved can expect to be called before that board and, third, in the event that the board reports significant instances of profiteering, in cases where the parties concerned are not willing to correct this voluntarily then, as the Prime Minister stated, the government would be prepared to seek parliamentary authority to undertake corrective action.

INTENTION OF GOVERNMENT RESPECTING INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO CONTROL PRICE OF BREAD

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact certain bakeries have already announced that they will proceed with a four cent increase, thereby ignoring the recommendation of the Food Prices Review Board, and the statement by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in the House yesterday, and in view of the undertaking given by the Prime Minister of September 4 last year that the government would take action in a legislative way if the industry did not comply voluntarily, is the government now prepared, in light of the recommendation of the Food Prices Review Board, to proceed with legislation to halt this unwarranted increase in the price of bread?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my answer has already been given in that regard.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, may I ask—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will return to the hon. member in a moment. I have already recognized the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore who has a supplementary. We will be continuing with this subject. The hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore.

● (1120)

INCREASES IN PRICE OF BREAD—REPRESENTATIONS AGAINST SUCH ACTION TO BAKERS NOT MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. If important bakeries in this country are not members of the Bakery Council, I should like to ask why the minister attempted to solve the problem of rising bread prices by working through the Bakery Council?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that this is argument. The hon. member may wish to ask the question