

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will allow the hon. member for Crowfoot's supplementary, but I suggest that in a moment or two we might go on to the next subject and if there is time return to this very important matter later during the question period. However, I will allow the hon. member a supplementary.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand your concern, but this is a very important matter to western Canada. The minister has suggested the two are complementary to each other. Surely he will agree that those people who will receive the low quota next fall and next year will also be in a position to receive the low assistance in respect of summerfallow and forage because of the very area in which they live?

Mr. Lang: The program, by its nature tailored to meet the need of the grains industry and particularly the surplus position in the grains industry, does affect differently people who are in a surplus grain position from people who are not truly in the grains industry but who are in mixed farming. There is no doubt, therefore, about the unevenness of the impact of the program in that regard, but I think it is fully justified consistent with the objective of the program.

[Translation]

FINANCE**BANK PROFITS AND INFLATION**

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the spiraling increase in the profits of chartered banks during the quarter ending January 31, 1970, as compared to the corresponding quarter last year—the Bank of Montreal, for instance, showing profits increased by 40 per cent during the last quarter—does the government consider requesting the banks to take drastic action against inflation?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the three months' figures produced for the banks I think were simply that, three months' figures. As I understand the forecasts they are that their profits over all for the year will not increase proportionately to their increase in volume of business. I should also like to point out that the banks have indicated to the Prices and Incomes Commission that they would not widen the margin between their borrowing and lending rates.

[Mr. Horner.]

[Translation]

Mr. Beaudoin: May I put a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance? His reply to me was that the interest rates should be equalized. Does this mean he intends to request the banks to actually lower their interest rates?

[English]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the interest rates would be equalized but that the agreement with the Prices and Incomes Commission was that the margin of profit would not be widened with respect to the borrowing and lending rates. Also, as I recall it the charges by the banks would not be increased.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Since the chartered banks undertook during meetings of the Prices and Incomes Commission to restrain credit and not the interest rates or their profits, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance if he could submit to the Prices and Incomes Commission a proposal to limit the banks' profits to the advantage of the Canadian people?

[English]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend needs to read the agreement that was arrived at and announced by the Prices and Incomes Commission.

POLLUTION**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON PHOSPHATE DETERGENTS**

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the importance of thoroughly researching this urgent question at the highest scientific levels before far-reaching decisions are made affecting the waterways of this country, has the matter of phosphate detergents been referred to the Science Council of Canada and, if so, when may we expect to know the recommendations of the Prime Minister's science adviser on this matter?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think I have made known the policy of the government in respect of phosphates. Of course we received advice from all the regular channels that are available on science matters to