

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): You are hogging the floor.

Mr. Lewis: I have indicated sufficient about these two companies to make my point. I would therefore ask the Prime Minister whether this clear evidence of excessive profits by food processing industries, which is a form of gouging of consumers, has convinced him and the government that greater power should be given to the Food Prices Review Board so that it can roll back some prices on the basis of such profits?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): If the hon. member will refer to my statements of August and September, he will find they were to the effect that the government would indeed be prepared to take action if reports were received from the Prices Review Board that they had looked into such cases, discussed them with management and the entrepreneurs involved, and that these people had refused to take the action that we thought was necessary for the welfare of Canadians. Then we would intervene. I have no knowledge of the particular cases to which the hon. member has referred, but I suggest he place them before the Prices Review Board if he has not already done so.

As to the effectiveness of government action, I refer the hon. member to the previous series of questions and answers. We did ensure that the prices of petroleum products would be frozen. This was indicated in my statement of September 4, and it is as a result of the government's action that the companies did agree to absorb the price increases rather than pass them on.

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ENERGY

INQUIRY AS TO ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE ON FIXED INCOMES IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES AND QUEBEC TO OFFSET INCREASED HEATING FUEL COST

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Finance on behalf of the people of eastern Canada, especially those on fixed incomes amounting to \$80 or \$100 a week who are trying to raise families and heat their homes. In view of the fact the hon. gentleman has rejected the idea that any special arrangements be made in respect of kerosene and stove oil, the fuels mainly used by people on low incomes, and since he has rejected any move to give back part of the billion dollars he collects from gasoline and fuel taxes, does he intend to offer people on fixed and low incomes in the Atlantic and Quebec areas any help in offsetting the increase in the cost of fuel?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): We have increased the disposable income of all Canadians, including eastern Canadians, by 6 per cent after discounting taxes and the rise in the cost of living. As far as the Atlantic provinces are concerned, the last budget resulted in the transfer of another \$200 million to the seven provinces receiving equalization payments, including the four Atlantic provinces, which, if those provinces were so disposed, could be passed back to the local ratepayers.

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members will appreciate that we have spent the question period up to this point largely on one very important matter. Perhaps we should attempt to move now to another subject.

Some hon. Members: No!

Mr. Speaker: Well, that is a decision for the Chair, of course. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate on his supplementary and then pass to the hon. member for Vaudreuil.

Mr. Lundrigan: Obviously the minister assumes that everyone in those provinces has a low form of intelligence—

Some hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Lundrigan:—and cannot understand his answers to question. The question I asked had nothing to do with what the minister talked about last spring, and nothing to do with transfer payments or equalization payments. He knows full well that those things have nothing to do with this immediate problem. I asked him to recognize the plight of the people faced with this immediate problem, which is only a matter of weeks old, and to offer some kind of indication—

• (1150)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me the hon. member is repeating the question he asked a moment ago, and perhaps at this point is putting it in the form of a representation. Perhaps hon. members might allow the minister to reply briefly so the Chair can recognize the next questioner.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I had not completed my question, but the fact of the matter is that if the minister is not going to answer the questions we pose and is going to bring forward deleterious arguments and information which in no way are related to the question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is of course, an argument the hon. member is putting forth at this time and what I suggested was an argument of representation rather than a question. However, in recognition of the importance of the matter I certainly have no objection to allowing the minister to reply.

Mr. Trudeau: Don't lose your cool, John.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I think the House is entitled to take note of the fact that there is a family allowance bill before us which will increase family allowances to the amount of \$20 a month per child and that we have escalated and raised old age pensions. All these measures are increasing the disposable incomes of Canadians as a relief against the erosion of income.

GOVERNMENT INTENTION RESPECTING EXTENSION OF OIL PIPELINE TO MONTREAL

Mr. H. T. Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is he firmly resolved to proceed as soon as