

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

MILK—PROPOSED PRICE INCREASE
IN ONTARIO

On the orders of the day:

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that two Ontario dairies are going to raise the price of milk by 2 cents a quart, and in view of the importance of milk in the diet of Canadians, what action does the minister propose to take to protect the consumer in this matter?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if I may I think I should remind the hon. member that the government of Canada has no constitutional authority to impose pervasive controls over the prices of goods and services except in a national emergency. At the federal level we rely, as I have said on many occasions in this house, on the forces of competition. If there is any evidence to the effect that prices are being artificially maintained, then the director of investigation and research can be expected to make a statutory inquiry.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): As a supplementary inquiry, will the minister consult with his colleague the Minister of Agriculture to find out what percentage of this increase is going to go to the dairy farmers?

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us in a few words what precisely is the function of his department?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that might take more than a few words, and that it should not be done at this time.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): As a further supplementary question may I ask the minister, in view of the fact that one of the functions of his department as set out in the act is to investigate price increases and to provide publicity with respect to its findings, is his department looking into this increase in the price of milk, and will a report be made in the event that an investigation is carried on?

Mr. Turner: It is the statutory function of the director of investigation and research under the Combines Investigation Act to scrutinize all price movements that come to his attention, and I think he can be expected to fulfil his statutory duty.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the minister how much worse things must get before there is a national emergency.

HOUSING

INTEREST RATES ON LOANS FOR STUDENT
AND PUBLIC HOUSING

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. Is the minister or the government considering an increase in the interest rates applicable to loans for student and public housing?

Hon. E. J. Benson (President of the Treasury Board): Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

AGRICULTURE

REPORTED SHORTAGE OF CHEMICALS TO
CONTROL WILD OATS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. D. McLelland (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Could he inform the house whether the Department of Agriculture has made any inquiries into the alleged shortage of chemicals to control wild oats, such as avadex—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McLelland: — and, if so, is the department taking any steps to improve the situation, such as authorizing research into new chemicals to be licensed and made available to the farmers?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the members of this government are far too mature to be concerned with wild oats, but I will be very pleased to look into this particular question.

Mr. Ed. Schreyer (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the mature Minister of Agriculture. When he was reported last week end as having said that when NATO was dropped Canada would have more money to devote to foreign aid, was he giving government policy?

Mr. Speaker: Order. A question, as the hon. member knows, cannot be asked in that form.