

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR CONSUMERS

Mr. Oza Tétrault (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a question of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Since he seems to be prepared to subsidize American consumers through the \$80 million program, in order, supposedly, to support employment in Canada, can he tell us whether he intends to suggest to the government the establishment of a program to support the consumer industry in Canada, as two persons out of five in this country are underfed, inadequately clothed, inadequately—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As the hon. member's question has now been asked, maybe the minister could now answer it.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, as I said at least 20 times in the House yesterday, the bill now before us has a very special purpose, that is to seek to solve the problem which the surcharge has created by preventing unemployment from increasing. I am sure that once this bill is passed there will still be mortal and venial sins committed in the economic, social and political system of Canada.

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Once this bill is passed, does he intend to bring in a bill to make up for the venial and mortal sins he has just mentioned?

Mr. Pepin: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

FARM ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM—PROVINCIAL PREMIERS' REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the definitive position of the provincial premiers urging that further action on the farm adjustment program be postponed until a committee of provincial Deputy Ministers of Agriculture arrives at alternative proposals, will he indicate to the House whether the government intends to abide by this wish and, if not, how he intends to proceed with these proposals?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly interested in taking their views into consideration, but I have to remind myself and hon. members that the proposals in this program have been before Canadian farmers for almost two years now and we have put a very high priority on getting something moving by way of making the program operative.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, since there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the program, are the

[Mr. Sharp.]

minister and his officials reviewing and reconsidering the proposals as set forth in the original white paper with a view to encouraging farmers to remain on the land rather than having them move off?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, of course that is not the objective of the program at all. It is to make viable farm units so that farmers can stay on their farms and have a reasonable return from their operations. I would say also that a great deal of the dissatisfaction with the progress of the program is that it is not operative today.

Mr. Mazankowski: Could the minister indicate whether he is prepared to meet with the committee that has been established by the deputy ministers of the provinces across Canada in order to discuss this program further?

Mr. Olson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to meet with them at any mutually convenient time but we have had several meetings with them during the past summer and indeed going back farther than that.

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GRAIN

RYE—POSSIBLE RELIEF FROM EFFECT OF UNITED STATES IMPORT SURTAX

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the statement by the minister to the House that the effect of the United States surcharge on agricultural commodities would be considered commodity by commodity and as the effect of the surcharge falls heavily on rye, now being purchased by elevators in Saskatchewan at 65 cents a bushel, which must be an all-time low since the depression, will the minister take immediate action on this commodity?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as I announced in the comprehensive remarks I made to the House the other night, we intend to do that on a commodity by commodity basis, but we certainly cannot take action until we see what the effects are and they are not well known in respect of any commodity yet.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There appear to be a number of supplementaries, but with the consent of hon. members we might go to another subject and return to this one as soon as possible. At this time the Chair will recognize the hon. member for St. John's East.

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AIR TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON REGIONAL POLICY

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the difficulties and uncertainties facing the airline industry in Canada, especially the regional air carriers and also Air Canada, and their inability to be able to effect long-term planning because of the lack of a