

Oral Questions

[Translation]

RISING COST OF SUGAR—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the same minister, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The other night on television, he was answering the questions of interviewers about the rising cost of different products. About antifreeze, for example, the minister suggested a price not exceeding \$10, but felt an inquiry should be made.

With regard to the price of sugar, the minister repeated: "We will conduct an inquiry". The minister is conducting an inquiry on about every product. Now, with regard to sugar, as soon as he said that an inquiry would be made, in fact as early as the next day, the price of sugar went up by \$3 per hundredweight. Is the minister aware that those companies are laughing at the government and the minister instead of taking the measures required to provide a good service to Canadian consumers?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member watched closely that TV program, he will recall that with regard to sugar, I indicated that it is not an inquiry which is being conducted, but that proceedings have been taken against three eastern Canada refineries. So, we take the matter very seriously since we have taken the matter to court. Besides, if the hon. member is suggesting that there is some profiteering, I will repeat what I said in the House yesterday: When the government introduces a profiteering legislation, I hope the hon. member will vote for it.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I readily believe the minister when he maintains that proceedings are being taken against the three largest sugar refineries. But since they are just the same increasing their price by \$3 per hundredweight, what does the minister intend to do in this connection? They scoff at the law, at the minister and at the government.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, Canadians have not voted for a price freeze in Canada. Secondly, when the profiteering bill is passed, we will be able to implement it. If the opposition members had maintained the government in power before the last election in order to enable it to pass that legislation, it would probably be in effect by now.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The minister urges me to vote with the government for a price freeze in order to maintain profits. I agree, but is he aware that an anti-combines legislation actually exists in Canada and that under its provisions, should the minister or the government bring this problem before the courts, those responsible can be sent to jail? I undertake in the presence of the minister and of the government to vote for the jailing of the thieves who create sugar monopolies in Canada. I shall vote with the minister then.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member is well aware that sentences are handed down by judges in Canada. In fact, there is an anti-combines act and we invoked it to take proceedings against three sugar companies in eastern Canada.

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● (1130)

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE UNILINGUAL ANGLOPHONE WILL NOT LOSE POSITION IF IT IS DESIGNATED UNILINGUAL FRENCH

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board and arises out of a speech that he made to the Club Richelieu two or three days ago in Quebec. In light of his statement that positions in the Ottawa area will be opened to unilingual French persons in the near future, will the minister undertake to the House and give us a guarantee, if he will, that no unilingual English speaking public servants who presently hold positions to be designated unilingual French will lose their present positions?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Forrestall: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I do not like to be too restrictive but it seems to me that the hon. member got exactly the guarantee from the minister for which he was looking. However, he may put a supplementary.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, seeing that the minister is in such a good mood I thought I might get the other part of the guarantee out of him at the same time. Would the minister also give his assurance that no positions designated unilingual French will be closed to any Canadian who is prepared to learn French?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I would welcome any Anglophone who wants to work in French.

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POST OFFICE

EFFECT OF REORGANIZATION OF POSTAL CODES—LACK OF EQUIPMENT IN VANCOUVER OFFICE

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Postmaster General. In view of the fact that individuals as well as business people have spent thousands of dollars printing stationery to include the postal code and are now forced to discard that stationery because those zones are being reorganized, would the minister please inform the House whether this reorganization is now complete and, therefore, save taxpayers further inconvenience and money?