

AGRICULTURE

PRICE OF WHEAT—ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a question of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council.

On December 13, 1985, a motion was passed in the House calling for the establishment of a committee to examine the domestic wheat price. What is the status of that reference at this time?

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Government is well aware of the Hon. Member's interest in this matter. I can tell him that the terms of reference are presently a matter for discussion among the House Leaders—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I was a bit worried about the question because it is really a question of House business. I think that perhaps it should be put that way.

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[Translation]

THE BUDGET

NEW 6 PER CENT TAX—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State (Finance). According to the Conference Board, the Government would not be able to reduce the deficit as it had hoped. Can the Minister of State (Finance) confirm whether the new 6 per cent business transfer tax to be levied as early as October 1 this year will offset the Government's revenue shortage not forecast in the February 1986 Budget? How do you propose to balance that Budget?

[English]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am a little bit bemused by all this focusing on what the Conference Board has said and has not said. Perhaps I could quote precisely what it has stated in its own hand.

Although we have used different assumptions regarding oil prices and interest rates, our analysis shows the federal deficit to be under \$30 billion for 1986-87 and decreasing thereafter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE ON NEW TAX IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of State for Finance. Can the Minister assure the House, and all Canadians, that no new tax will be implemented until the next Budget?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think that is a hypothetical question. The Hon.

Oral Questions

Member is once again trying to spread confusion on the basis of a newspaper report concerning a Conference Board study which we did not write and for which we are not responsible.

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[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

IMPACT OF PUBLIC SERVICE LAY-OFFS

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Could the Minister explain why the Government has done nothing to assess the impact on women of its job cuts in the Public Service? Is it fair that most of these job cuts should be concentrated in the Public Service where wages are the lowest, therefore affecting job categories where the proportion of women is the highest?

[English]

Hon. Walter McLean (Minister of State (Immigration)): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Hon. Member for posing what is a very sensitive and difficult issue. As Hon. Members know, the situation which was outlined by the President of the Treasury Board is a temporary one. The former Government Departments become tremendously unwieldy. I have been in touch with the President of the Treasury Board about the sensitivity in relation to these necessary actions. The Government has taken a number of actions which are designed specifically to see that those affected such as women enter the Canadian Jobs Strategy. If we look at the question of employment, broadly speaking, and particularly—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Minister is making what should be a statement. On a supplementary question, the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy).

REQUEST THAT STUDY BE CONDUCTED

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, whether or not the situation is temporary, the lay-offs which are taking place are permanent. Will the Minister responsible for the status of women ensure that the Government undertakes and publishes an impact study with respect to the effect of the Public Service job cuts on women? Since women make up 41 per cent of the Public Service of Canada, will the Government guarantee that no more than that percentage of employees who are women will be fired as a result of the job cuts?

Hon. Walter McLean (Minister of State (Immigration)): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Hon. Member that there is a maximum amount of sensitivity in this whole area along the lines of which the Hon. Member speaks. The question of employment equity, and the question of getting women out of ghettoized jobs where they are the first affected when there are these movements in any part of the economy, are a matter of priority. This is also true for the question of equal pay for