

AGRICULTURE

CROP DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS TO APPLE GROWERS

Mr. Fred King (Okanagan-Similkameen): Madam Speaker, I must confess that I am having voice problems because I have neglected to eat my apple a day.

Mr. LeBlanc: Watch your Adam's apple.

Mr. King: However, my question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister and the parliamentary secretary, if he is present, are very much aware of the hardship which has resulted from months of delay in authorizing deficiency payments to the Canadian apple producers following the disastrous prices achieved for the 1980 crop. They also know that the national average price achieved for the 1980 apple crop was 6.85 cents per pound, which is comparable to 11 cents, the five-year average. In this circumstance will the parliamentary secretary undertake to ensure that the minister fully understands that deficiency payments to Canadian apple producers, under provisions of the Agricultural Stabilization Act, must now be despatched without any further delay?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I must take the question as notice, and I will immediately bring it to the attention of the minister.

An hon. Member: Where is the parliamentary secretary?

Mr. Pepin: I am sure that we will have an answer by three o'clock this afternoon.

DELAY IN MAKING PAYMENTS

Mr. Fred King (Okanagan-Similkameen): Would the hon. gentleman also take the following question to the minister? This question is also directed to that minister, who knows full well that the protracted delay in making stabilization payments to the farmers has been due to outdated methods of calculation, to a large extent. This, together with totally unrealistic tonnage limitations, is responsible for much of the unhappiness which presently surrounds the functioning of the Agricultural Stabilization Act.

Will this question be conveyed to the minister? Will he assure this House, as soon as possible, that active steps are being undertaken to upgrade and update the way in which this act fulfils its role in keeping Canadian agriculture viable?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Bis, Madam Speaker.

Oral Questions

● (1150)

THE ECONOMY

INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT REVENUES

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance who, on numerous occasions in this House, has indicated very clearly that one of the reasons we are suffering from high interest rates in Canada is increased inflation. He has directly connected the two of them. I wonder if the minister could indicate what part has been played in the government battle against inflation by such government programs as the increase recently in the excise tax in Canada, the proposed increase in the price of postage stamps, beginning in January, and the extraction from the Canadian public over the next 5 years of some \$50 billion?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has put together in his question a number of separate policies, but obviously he has referred as the main point to the energy agreement between the province of Alberta and other provinces and the Government of Canada, which has obviously resulted in higher energy prices and will continue to have that effect, even though the price in Canada will be lower than world levels. I believe his party certainly has subscribed to the necessity of higher energy prices, for very important national objectives. There is absolutely no doubt about it, that increased energy prices contribute to increases in the cost of living. That is clear. What has happened in other countries is that these energy price increases have been absorbed by the population in an effort to meet the challenge posed by energy price increases in the world.

RATE OF RETURN PAID ON CANADA SAVINGS BONDS

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, the minister will recognize that in the course of that absorption to which he makes reference, inflation increased, and what we have are three specific illustrations of inflation producing policies of this government. One of the other problems that confront people who are renewing their mortgages, the minister will recognize, is the competition that lending institutions have with respect to the availability of funds. Can the minister tell this House how he has contributed to the availability of funds with respect to lending institutions when he has competed with them by setting a rate of 19.5 per cent for Canada Savings Bonds?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have already dealt with that question earlier in the session and have recognized that by putting a limit on the amount of CSBs that could be bought by an individual an adverse effect might occur. But since that time mortgage rates have lowered, and I do not regard the CSB rate at the moment as an obstacle to the flow of additional funds into the mortgage market.