

Oral Questions

strong weapon but I am not ready for the time being to put any of the railways into bankruptcy in order to obtain information.

MOVEMENT OF GRAIN—USE OF CONTROLLERS AT
VANCOUVER AND THUNDER BAY

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my supplementary question to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Would he advise the House what has happened to the two people whom he had acting, I believe, in the role of controller, one at Vancouver and one at Thunder Bay? Are they still acting and, if so, what are they doing? If they are not, why not?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, there has been a change of personnel in one case, but the functions are being continued.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will see the hon. member for Vegreville for a supplementary and will then recognize the hon. member for York South for his supplementary.

SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEM OF GRAIN
TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Transport. Having regard to the fact that the government has no transportation policy but one is in the process of being developed, during which time this country is suffering severe dislocation as a result of disruption of transportation, may I ask the minister when we can expect an announcement regarding short-term measures to alleviate the problem of grain transportation? The other day he indicated the appointment of a co-ordinator or transportation supervisor with respect to the movement of lumber and other commodities, having regard to the fact that railway loadings are 3.5 per cent less this year than the previous year.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member is asking is what will be the long-term policy, not the short-term policy. As far as grain is concerned, I think the hon. member should put his question to the Minister of Justice who is in charge of the Wheat Board. As far as lumber is concerned—

Mr. Mazankowski: Is he going to be the new transport minister?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I interrupt the hon. minister? It seems to me that we are getting involved in a debate rather than in a period of questions and answers. I shall recognize the hon. member for York South on a supplementary.

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

[*English*]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

INCREASE IN PROFITS OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY—
ACTION TO ROLL BACK PRICE OF BEEF

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs which also arises out of the fact that the food processing industry has had such a huge increase in profits, and out of the fact that, despite a steady drop in the price of beef to the producer since about the middle of last month, there has not been a decrease in the price of beef to the consumer. May I ask the minister whether the government is considering necessary action to force a rollback in the price of beef to the consumer? If anything is obvious, it is that the consumer of beef is being gouged at the present time.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, various alternatives are constantly being studied. We have previously informed the House of the special study of beef price margins now under way and which will be completed in approximately two to three weeks. The results of the study will, I think, form a useful basis for the consideration of action by the government.

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AGRICULTURE

SUBSIDY TO BEEF PRODUCERS—REQUEST FOR
RECONSIDERATION IN CONSULTATION WITH INDUSTRY
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the chaotic conditions in cattle marketing and in the whole cattle industry, is the minister prepared to sit down this evening or tomorrow morning with industry representatives and reconsider the whole question of the beef subsidy?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are in constant touch with the industry. The latest report as of ten minutes ago seems to indicate that the whole buying program is levelling out and doing what we hoped it would do.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: I am not saying it is perfect, but it has certainly moved a long way in the right direction today. As the day goes on the market trend seems to be to do what it should be doing, which is marketing beef according to the procedure they have followed in the past. If hon. members have any sound advice they can give—

Some hon. Members: Resign!

Mr. Whelan: —we are ready to accept it. Up till now there have been some suggestions which we are following up. Otherwise, if there are no further suggestions for improving the position, what else can we do?