

to keep food prices to the consumer from continuing to escalate.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there will be proposals put before the conference of that kind, but not only at this particular conference, of course. The Minister of Agriculture himself has emphasized on a number of occasions that this is one of the main purposes of policies now being proposed by the government to deal with the inflationary problem.

POSSIBILITY OF A PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAM—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture, whichever one of them feels he can deal with the question, whether the government will propose a program of price support for agricultural products so that the farmer may be able to plan ahead and to increase the supply of food products but at the same time be guaranteed a reasonable and decent income, taking into account his costs of production.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can say about what I will say at the conference is this: my approach would be—concrete perhaps is not the right word to use—solid. It would be a solid approach to agricultural production that would mean benefits not only to the agricultural producer, but for the consumer in Canada, for consumers in the world and for customers we have built up by export sales largely for our agricultural products.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for York South on a supplementary and then, as I said a moment ago, the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

* * *

FINANCE

POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROVINCIAL BANKS
UNDER PUBLIC OWNERSHIP—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, perhaps some day I will learn the difference between concrete and solid. I should like to turn to another subject to be dealt with at the western conference and ask the Acting Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance, whichever one of them wishes to answer, whether the federal government will be ready to agree to an amendment to the Bank Act in order to make it possible for provinces to establish provincial banks under public ownership, if the provinces so desire.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is one of the options I suppose that is open to the federal government, and any reaction to that proposal would be made at the conference itself.

Oral Questions

INQUIRY AS TO PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH WESTERN
CANADIAN BANK

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. It bears on a question I asked two months ago. Has the minister yet received any official contact from a group in western Canada to set up a western Canadian bank?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

● (1120)

[Later:]

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

PARITY PRICES FOR FEED GRAINS DISCUSSION AT
WESTERN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES CONFERENCE

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Agriculture. I hope this will not deprive me of the right to ask another question when my turn comes.

During the western Conference on Economic Opportunities, will the matter of feed grain prices be considered? At present, these grains sell in Manitoba at \$45 a ton against \$80 in the province of Quebec. Will there be a discussion on price parity for all Canadian farmers?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting my provincial counterparts in Prince Edward Island, at Charlottetown, before the western conference. Feed grain discussions will take place at that meeting. Any feed grain program that I or the government have anything to do with will be a Canadian feed grain policy.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Témiscamingue wishes to ask a supplementary question.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, this is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member asked a supplementary question. I will therefore give the floor to other members who have supplementary questions, and then to the hon. member.

[English]

FEED GRAINS—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE THAT
MARKETING BY WHEAT BOARD WILL BE DISCUSSED AT
WESTERN CONFERENCE

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the statement by the Prime Minister that the marketing of feed grains would be a subject for consideration at the conference and the fact there is no mention of this in the position papers, can the minister assure the House that the principle of orderly marketing