

members of the board or with the minister and is he prepared to request that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs come in this House in a day or two with a report as to precisely what the board is doing and how it is organizing its work?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, on the first part of the question the answer is no. I have not discussed this matter with the chairman or any members of the board. As to the other part of the question, I have not, following yesterday's question period, had any discussion on this matter with the minister. He indeed had to leave for the west where he is speaking to the Canadian Automobile Association's annual meeting. I certainly will, on his return, convey the suggestion of the Leader of the New Democratic Party and see what the minister plans to do.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister another question in relation to the board. In view of the government's emasculation of the idea of a food prices review board that would have some power to do something about the increase in prices and in view of the fact that the board does not now have the power to do anything effective in this area, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government is now considering ways in which the powers of the board might be strengthened so that it can really serve the interests of the Canadian people?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is the attitude of the government that the board should be given an opportunity to proceed with its work. Surely, as an ongoing process we will want to judge the effectiveness of that work and if necessary we will take further measures.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Prime Minister has today expressed concern about this matter and in view of the obvious fact that the matter is one of urgency, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he is ready to permit the board to drag its feet, to take weeks to organize itself and weeks longer before it starts to do its work or will the government carry out its responsibility to see to it that the board functions on the basis of the urgent requirements of the Canadian consumers?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I repeat that I have not talked to the members of the board, but the board is composed of very responsible men and women of the Canadian public. I would not want to subscribe to the type of accusation that has just been levelled against it by the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

● (1500)

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Compton and then may call on hon. members for supplementaries afterwards.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ENERGY

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS—MEASURES TO STABILIZE PRICE AND STORAGE

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

In view of the present situation in connection with oil products and the concern it has caused, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he considers that the prices of oil products, both imported and domestic, will increase again in the near future. If so, does he deem it essential to act now to find the technical and economic means likely to ensure the stability of storage, prices, interest and transportation rates, in the best interests of the Canadian people?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I share the concern of the hon. member who asked this question, but I must confess that I am not more than he is in a position to predict, with a certain measure of certainty, what will happen on the oil markets within the next few months. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is indeed very much concerned about this problem and, as already reflected in the steps it took a few weeks ago to limit the exports of oil, gas and fuel oil to the United States, the government is certainly ready to take the necessary measures, if the hypothetical situation which the hon. member fears effectively materializes.

MEASURE TO CONTROL DISTRIBUTION AND PRICE OF GAS AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

When the Prime Minister says that he is prepared to take steps, if needed, does he mean to say that the government is prepared to take measures similar to those taken in Florida concerning the distribution and price control of gas and oil and to take court actions against Canadian or American firms?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the first question referred to a problematic situation. I cannot predict the future any more than the hon. member for Shefford, but I can assure him that if Canadian companies violate the law of the country, the government will indeed see to it that they are taken before the courts.

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[English]

FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD

POSSIBLE STRENGTHENING OF POWERS OF BOARD— POSITION OF GOVERNMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the change of heart of the NDP in that they now agree that the Food Prices Review Board as it is presently constituted is ineffective, will the Prime Minister now agree to review the terms of reference of the Food