

Oral Questions

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

INQUIRY RESPECTING BOMB FOUND IN RICHELIEU RIVER—REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister.

This morning, on a Montreal radio station, people were talking of the emotion caused by the mysterious discovery of a bomb in the Richelieu River, near Lacolle. Would the Prime Minister have any clarification to give to the House concerning this?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot clarify this mystery at this time. I know that this government, through the responsible minister, is looking for the required information, and as soon as this has been obtained, I shall see to it that it is forwarded, if possible, to the hon. member.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, since it has been possible to establish that this bomb is of an American make, the Americans must have found out that one was missing. Does the Prime Minister intend to inquire from the American authorities concerning the time when they lost that bomb?

[English]

Hon. James A. Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, it is correct that a bomb was located in about 15 feet of water in the Richelieu River. It has been recovered by members of the Armed Forces, and I think they should be congratulated for their skill and bravery in this undertaking.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Richardson: We still have to investigate the origin of the bomb, and this is being done.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

REASON FOR REDUCTION IN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF WHEAT PRICE WHICH MAY CAUSE INCREASE IN PRICE OF BREAD

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): I should like to get back to the Prime Minister and to the wheat announcement made last night. In the light of three facts, namely that the price of bread will go up, that the producers will get no more for it and that the government right now has a cash surplus of \$350 million, why was it thought appropriate, especially at this time when our rate of increase in the cost of living is the highest in the western world—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lawrence: Why did the government think it appropriate to go ahead now?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member would agree that a question asked in those terms is really an argument.

[Mr. Whelan.]

Mr. Lawrence: May I rephrase the question, then?

Mr. Speaker: I suggested yesterday, and perhaps I ought not to have done so, that when questions are asked that are not in order, the questioner should allow another member to put his question. Nevertheless, the hon. member might perhaps be allowed to rephrase his question.

Mr. Lawrence: Can the Prime Minister tell the House why the government feels it appropriate at this time, given the circumstances I have outlined, to increase the price of bread to consumers?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I might begin by correcting the impression given or the facts as stated by the hon. member. Of course, the producer will receive more. He will receive it because the price of wheat is going up. And of course the consumer will benefit. He will benefit to the tune of \$60 million of the taxpayers' money because the government is providing this \$60 million from the treasury, which is a form of subsidy for the consumer. As to the question about the surplus, it is really a matter of whether the hon. member wants tax revenue and surpluses to be distributed in consumer subsidies right and left or whether he hopes that eventually taxes in this country will go down.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

FAMILY ALLOWANCES—REQUEST THAT LEGISLATION BE PROCEEDED WITH IMMEDIATELY

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): A question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Bearing in mind the drastic increase which is taking place in the price of basic commodities such as food, and the effect this will have on low-income families, and particularly on the children of disadvantaged families, will the Prime Minister now direct that the family allowance legislation, which is presently low on the priority scale, be put back on top where it should be, and introduce the bill for second reading immediately?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am sure that if the bill is low on somebody's list of priorities it is not the government's but probably that of the Conservative opposition—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: As far as we are concerned, this bill is to come into effect on January 1. Our planning is to this effect and short of some unbelievable filibuster by the Conservatives, this will happen.

INCREASE IN COST OF FOOD—SUGGESTED STRENGTHENING OF POWERS OF REVIEW BOARD

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): A supplementary along those lines of questioning. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he takes seriously enough the threat of the leader of the NDP to withdraw from the