

*Oral Questions*

ation of Canada has always been opposed to controlling interest rates, as you were advocating.

What Canadian consumers want is healthy competition among financial institutions, as they would benefit from competitive interest rates. We are very happy with this.

[English]

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** That is all very interesting, Mr. Speaker. Opposition members are usually accused of having prepared questions. This minister had a prepared answer for a question that I did not ask.

I want to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs the following question. While accepting some of the recommendations of the committee earlier this week concerning consumer credit cards, why did the minister refuse to adopt the most important recommendation, namely to put a cap on credit card interest rates? Is this not proof that the government across the way is interested only in bankers and not consumers?

**Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) and Minister of State (Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague had listened, I said that the Consumers' Association of Canada told the press and the people of Canada that it is not in favour of capping those interest rates because it is not in its best interest. We as a government must ensure that the benefits to consumers are the best we can obtain. In the specific case, we must have competitiveness in that sector which is in the best interest of consumers. I think that is what we have done and the Consumer's Association of Canada is on our side.

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[Translation]

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, Canada's environment minister announced a wide-ranging consultation on the Canadian Green Plan. My question is: Since all Canadians are concerned about the deterioration of their environment, when will the Canadian government take specific action to restore and protect the environment, following the tabling of this Green Plan?

[English]

**Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, as the document made public yesterday indicates, there is a four-stage process now in place and a process which will involve all interested Canadians in being part of the solution. During the course of the next six weeks there will be information sessions taking place in 30 communities across Canada. That will be followed by consultations with provincial governments in all of the capitals with interested bodies, including environmental groups. Following that there will be a specific plan put in place which will be announced to Parliament early in the fall.

In addition, and very important, there will be new EARP legislation, environmental assessment legislation introduced to this House within the next few weeks that will replace the very inadequate EARP guidelines that have been such a barrier to this government during the course of the last two years.

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#### FORESTRY

**Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of the Environment announced an environment plan that we see from the previous question is all talk and no action. In Canada the backlog of unplanted areas continues to grow. Despite this, the government has not renewed forest agreements with Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Tomorrow, British Columbia's agreement expires.

My question is to the Minister of Forestry. Will the minister use this occasion today to announce that he will sign those agreements? Will he announced today that he will sign a joint \$700 million tree planting agreement with British Columbia?

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because it does point to the very significant achievements that have been made as a result of the action we took five years ago, not only in terms of restoring and rehabilitating some of our forests, but also in terms of the environmental impact such actions have.

I can tell my hon. friend today that we are one day closer to signing the agreement than we were yesterday.