

loan. Current rates for five-year mortgages are at their lowest level in seven years.

—The interest rate on five-year mortgages from the Farm Credit Corporation has dropped three points.

Mr. Speaker, that is what I call leadership, a fact that is recognized by the Gaspé, Quebecers and Canadians.

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● (1110)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO ASSIST WESTERN FARMERS

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, falling world grain prices have impacted seriously on our farm economy. In response, the Government over the past 15 months has contributed, through the Western Grain Transportation Act, federal share of crop insurance, federal share of western grain stabilization, federal crop drought assistance, cash advances to farmers, rail branch line expenditures, livestock drought assistance, and fuel excise and sales tax rebates, some \$2 billion to western agriculture.

In Saskatchewan the provincial Government has, through a number of programs such as the Farm Purchase Program, the farmers' oil royalty rebate, livestock cash advances, crop insurance adjustments, production loan guarantees, Ag credit, and others, injected more than \$1.5 billion into the agricultural economy. Never in Canadian history have any two levels of Government made such a response to the needs of western agriculture.

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EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETING

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, imagine my surprise this morning when I went into the committee on Employment and Immigration and moved a motion that the salary of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) be reduced to \$1 until she revokes the cruel and unfair imposition of changes in the Unemployment Insurance Act, and the only Conservative Member who had bothered to show up, other than the chairman—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order!

Ms. Copps: —fled the committee.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Ms. Copps: Fled the committee. Where are the Conservatives?

S.O. 21

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Timiskaming.

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THE ECONOMY

REDUCTIONS IN BANK AND MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, anyone who has read the headlines in the morning newspapers is aware of the dramatic drop in the bank rate yesterday. In his last Budget the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) said that this fall would happen, and it has. Canadians across this great land realize that the Government has taken the right course to achieve lower interest rates.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, let us look at five-year mortgage rates. Since the election five-year mortgage rates are down by 3.5 points, a savings of over \$108 a month, or of \$6,500 over five years on a \$50,000 mortgage. What a difference that is from the 20 per cent plus levels which prevailed under the Liberal Government. Mortgages are now lower than they have been in the last seven years. Mr. Speaker, this is what a sound Government is all about.

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AIRPORTS

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT—EMPLOYMENT FEES CHARGED TO BAGGAGE HANDLERS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, free enterprise is alive and well at Pearson International Airport. Four enterprising skycaps or baggage handlers approached the airlines with an offer to manage the skycap services at the airport for free. The airlines, seeing an opportunity to comply with Transport Canada regulations about maintaining such services at the airport, while eliminating any expense to do so, of course leaped at the scheme.

These four entrepreneurs then put the arm on the baggage handlers and said that they must pay them \$80 a week to work there or they would be out. That is \$4,000 a year to work for tips, Mr. Speaker. Two skycaps complained to the media and were fired. Two more were fired this week for taking time off while sick. Under this payola scheme workers with a doctor's certificate cannot even take time off while sick. It is like organized crime, or like free enterprise.

When I first communicated this to the Minister a month ago, he expressed sympathy for the skycaps in the press. However, he has yet to reply to myself, or to make his interest known to those who have lost their jobs. Lip service in the press will not solve this problem or assist the skycaps—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Sixty seconds.