

Government of Canada to sign no free trade agreements with the United States until such time as it comes to grips with the problem of how to deal with access to the U.S. market for the Canadian steel industry.

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POLITICAL PARTIES

LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CONVENTION

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, today there is a strange fog rolling into Ottawa from North and South, from East and West. This fog is thick and warm and full of spirits. I am told that this fog is to last for four days and then the sun is to break through, and a new chief disciple of confusion is to be proclaimed. Party politics is the very essence of confusion.

For months now, the airwaves have heralded the coming of John, and the promise of a new gospel according to John. But which John is it to be? Is it to be John, or Jean, or Johnston? Or is it to be John Turn-right, or Jean the Creator, or John-boy, or perhaps John the Reformer, or even Smoke-Signal John? Or is it to be Almost John, who is really Stetson Gene?

After the first salvo, who is to be marked as John the successor to Pierre the Great? Let us hope that, come Monday, the fog will have rolled out into the hinterland again and that this place will regain its perspective.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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● (1415)

FARM CREDIT CORPORATION

INTEREST RATE LEVELS—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, the Government claims to have the best interests of Canadian farmers at heart. Every day I hear different Cabinet Ministers rise in the House and announce assistance for large corporations and guaranteed loans for other financially failing companies, such as Dome Petroleum. Yet when the Minister of Agriculture was questioned about assisting farmers by reducing farm credit lending rates, his only response was that rates are determined by U.S. monetary policy. When asked to extend the Farm Credit Corporation's interest assistance program to protect farmers from a sudden rise to a higher rate of interest, the answer was that no such proposal was being considered.

This, to me, shows a complete lack of commitment to this vital sector of our economy. Surely if the Minister of Agriculture could convince Cabinet that we must have a thriving agricultural industry in order to feed our people, Cabinet would see that further protection from escalating interest rates is essential now. Perhaps the Minister knows there is no use

Oral Questions

talking to Cabinet because agriculture has not been on its list of priorities for the last 16 years. As a result, we risk the possibility of losing our reputation as a net exporter of agricultural products and, indeed, of even becoming unable to feed ourselves.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

POOLS

CANADA SPORTS POOL CORPORATION—FINANCIAL POSITION OF CORPORATION

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of amateur sport. It is a simple question. How much money has the sports pool lost to date? How much is it losing weekly?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I must say that when the Canadian Sports Pool Corporation was started a number of weeks ago, it was very successful in getting a share of the market. The trouble began, however, when the provinces decided to boycott the sports Pool and to actually stop the sale of tickets in locations that had the facilities to sell them. The Canadian Sports Pool Corporation has made a tremendous effort to establish itself on the market and to stay there. To do so, the Corporation has spent funds it was allowed to spend under the Act.

[English]

Mr. Bosley: We have another clear, specific, and direct answer, Mr. Speaker.

CORPORATION'S FUTURE PLANS

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, since it would appear that the sports pool is losing approximately \$750,000 a week, making even John Turner look like a piker, could the Minister tell the House what plans he now has in place, or is preparing to bail out the sports pool? Specifically, will the Minister confirm that he and his staff are considering a second game, modelled after the 6-49 lottery?

Will the Minister also confirm that a proposal is apparently under preparation to come to the Government to ask for a further \$20 million for the sports pool?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member opposite is letting his rhetoric run away with him, and he is now trying to destroy any hope of helping—of doing what we wanted to