

Oral Questions

since the 1930s. Young farmers are being driven off the farm in record numbers. Fully 30 per cent of farmers are in serious financial difficulty. When is the Government going to take action and bring in new debt restructuring instruments to assist farmers in staying on the land?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, to answer the Hon. Member's question, I may remind him that since we came to power, with the Minister of Agriculture we have been working very hard to restructure agriculture and provide for future generations of farmers. There is the 6 per cent program, for instance. We have the shared-cost mortgage. If we look at the situation the Liberals left us, with farm credit rates at nearly 20 per cent, and at the present rate of 10 per cent, we have a real success story, that will have an impact on farming and on future generations of farmers in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the Parliamentary Secretary that 97 per cent of farmers, or 50,000, rejected the commodity-based mortgage.

REPORTED OVERCHARGING BY CHARTERED BANKS—REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of State for Finance. He knows that banks overcharged hundreds of farmers by switching their notes from a fixed rate of interest to a floating rate, a higher rate, during the 1980s.

Mr. McDermid: When the Liberals were in power.

Mr. Foster: Since the Inspector General of Banks has refused to take action, is the Government prepared to set up a public inquiry into this overcharging by the chartered banks in the face of serious financial difficulty for our farmers?

● (1450)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, that particular matter has been brought up in the House a number of times in the last two months by Members on both sides of the aisle. The Inspector General of Banks is preparing a report and expects to have it in my hands this week.

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THE CONSTITUTION

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS—REQUEST FOR FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and is a follow-up to the question I asked him on Friday. As he knows, the aboriginal

people feel that they were left out in the cold as a result of the Meech Lake Accord.

I asked the Deputy Prime Minister on Friday whether he, the Prime Minister, or the Minister responsible would call the Governments of Quebec and the other provinces and ensure that there will be agreed-upon First Ministers' conferences on aboriginal rights. Will the Government undertake to do that?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the Hon. Member, with his vast parliamentary experience, would have recognized that this issue is being debated on the floor of the House sponsored by the New Democratic Party as an Opposition Day motion. Surely the points which he has raised in Question Period today and on Friday can be raised and responded to during the course of that debate.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, that may be possible, but I am asking the Deputy Prime Minister a question as to government policy.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, the native people feel offended because there is no guarantee that there will be a First Ministers' conference on aboriginal rights. Will the Deputy Prime Minister call the Government of the Province of Quebec and the Governments of the other provinces to ensure that a First Ministers' conference is agreed upon and that aboriginal rights will be a main topic on the agenda?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister of Justice has participated in the debate today and has answered that question. If the Member was not here to hear the Minister of Justice, I would invite him to read *Hansard*.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

CANADIAN CONTENT—CLOSURE OF SHELTER-GLOBE PLANT IN WINDSOR

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. Last week the Shelter-Globe Company said it had closed its Windsor plant putting 200 workers out of work overnight because of the Government's policy of allowing offshore automotive manufacturers unlimited access to the Canadian market with regard to auto parts.

Why is the Government refusing to establish a policy now that offshore automobile companies which want to manufacture or import in the Canadian market must follow the same