

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Kaufman says that Canada has done much better than the United States and that Canadian fiscal and monetary policies are better structured. That is a witness who might impress a former president of the Montreal Stock Exchange.

**Mr. Hees:** The people who impress me are Canadian economists, not Americans.

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**AGRICULTURE****EFFECTIVENESS OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOND PROGRAM**

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. Amidst all the economic difficulties he has been enduring and dealing with in the last while I would like to ask the minister if he has noticed that spring has sprung and that, with that, the agricultural community is facing another severe difficulty in looking for financing for spring planting. One thing that might have worked, which is not at all working in areas where it is needed, is the small business bond. There have been a number of questions and answers, but the reality is that at the level of the individual farmer the mechanism is just not working. Banks have excuses, and there are a whole bunch of things wrong.

● (1450)

Has the Minister of Finance talked to the banks? Is there anything which he is prepared to do to ensure that that mechanism in fact works, so that the agricultural community has access to funds for spring planting?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member asked whether I propose to speak to the banks. I know that the last time the question was raised in the House, conversations were held with the banks. They were asked whether indeed the benefits of the small business bond were being made available. The fact of the matter is that at the present time there is almost \$3 billion committed to financing under the small business bond. I believe it offers very promising results for farmers.

The hon. member will recall that he was one of those who urged me to apply the benefits of the small business bond to unincorporated businesses, including farmers. That was carried out. Certainly the banks have my encouragement and support in providing the fullest possible service to farmers.

The hon. member said that there were a "bunch" of difficulties. That is an awful lot, if they come in bunches. I would be glad if the hon. member would give me some specifics so that I could follow up the matter further with the bankers with whom I will be holding consultations in the very near future.

## THREATS TO FARMERS

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. I think his response indicates to the Canadian people just how far he and his policies are out of touch with reality or with what is going on at the local level. I said, "a bunch". I challenge him to show me the number of farmers or the number in the agricultural community who have actually received the small business bond.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gurbin:** I will leave that and ask a supplementary question. Madam Speaker, \$3 billion was development. We are in the bail-out bond business now and it just is not working. Does the Minister of Finance understand another point with banks and farmers, that is the point that banks are now threatening farmers who have become involved in movements to try to create some solutions to the problem? They are threatening them with cutting off their credit. These are farmers who already have lines of credit established, being threatened by banks that their credit will be cut off if they do not stop being involved in movements to try to solve some of the problems. Is the minister aware of that and, if he is, will he do something about it?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I am not aware of that. If the hon. member could provide evidence that bankers are threatening farmers because they are carrying out their responsibilities as citizens, I should like to have facts on the matter and I will raise them with the Inspector General of Banks.

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[*Translation*]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES****RESTRUCTURING OF FINANCING OF ASSOCIATION  
CANADIENNE FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State and concerns official language minorities programs. On February 16 of this year, the Department of the Secretary of State, without prior consultation with the persons concerned, announced the restructuring of financing of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. Whereas the Secretary of State's position is not set forth in any public document in which concrete proposals could be examined; whereas a number of organizations have asked the Secretary of State to reconsider a decision that can be qualified as hasty, unilateral and in some ways even threatening for Franco-Ontarians; whereas 13 out of 19 regional associations are giving their democratic support to the provincial ACFO, is the Secretary of State prepared to grant a one-year moratorium so that there can be democratic consultation as well as an in-depth study of