

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that the Farm Credit Corporation is a Crown corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: I am glad to see that even the Leader of the Opposition says it is a good one. I believe it is the eleventh largest lending institution in Canada at the present time. This year will be its biggest ever for lending money to farmers, and 56 per cent of its funds will go to refinancing farmers from the private sector, from the banking institutions and other lending institutions. That is the greatest extent to which we have ever become involved in taking over the responsibilities for loans from these other lending institutions.

I have received a full report on the Farm Credit Corporation but I have not had time to look at it. I will be glad to report to the Hon. Member tomorrow what the position is at the present time.

Mr. Mayer: Madam Speaker, the Minister knows that I am new to my position so I thank him very much for informing me that the Farm Credit Corporation is a Crown corporation. I was not aware of that before!

ROLE OF CORPORATION

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Let me repeat the question, Madam Speaker, and ask the Minister for a yes or no answer. Has he approached the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Farm Credit Corporation for permission for it to meet the needs of the farm community and not simply become a lender of last resort? Could I have a yes or no answer for the Minister?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows the lending policy of the Farm Credit Corporation. I am sure he has studied the legislation and knows that we are following the lines of the legislation as far as we can go.

An Hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Whelan: We are lending under the rules and guidelines set down by the legislation.

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MEDICAL CARE

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON EXTRA BILLING BY DOCTORS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister will know that many Canadians are reported to be concerned about the rising incidence of extra billing and user-fees. As a participant in the debate on medicare, she is aware of the concern that many Canadians have about it. This is a concern which even the new Leader of the Opposition had to acknowledge finally. Even though he began

Presence in Gallery

his by-election campaign by saying that medicare was not an issue, he had finally to admit that it was, although he only came up with half a solution when he did so.

May I ask the Minister if we can expect a concrete proposal to be put before the House, before the provincial Ministers of Health and before the country, in whatever way she chooses? When are we going to get a concrete proposal? Could she give us some timetable showing when we might expect that the babbling will stop and the action will start?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Yes of course, Madam Speaker. It would have been impolite—and the Hon. Member would have been the first one to shout at me this afternoon—if I had not waited for the provincial Ministers who wanted me to go to Halifax last week to listen to their proposals. But they did not have any proposals to make and I am sorry to say that the meeting was quite a waste of time for many people involved in it. I really regret that they had not done any homework whatsoever. The Canadian Government's position paper was put out at the end of July and in it the position, which is well known by all Canadians, is expressed. The Bill which will finalize it is in the process of getting Cabinet approval right now.

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTER

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, one way that I suggested the Minister could indicate she is sincere about medicare would be to make a concrete proposal. Another way in which she could indicate she was sincere—

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Member will ask the question, please.

Mr. Blaikie: —would be to indicate—

Some Hon. Members: Order, order!

Madam Speaker: Question.

Mr. Blaikie: Will the Minister indicate to the House that she is serious about saving medicare—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA

Madam Speaker: I think I ought to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our galleries of the Premier of Nova Scotia, Mr. Buchanan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!