

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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● (1415)

THE SENATE

CALL FOR ABOLITION—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my motion under Standing Order 43 does not arise out of the fact that the journalists beat the MPs in the ball game last night; it arises out of the fact that today is the seventy-third birthday of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). In recognition of his great contribution to this House and his service to Parliament and the people of Canada, as a birthday gift I call upon the Government of Canada, in full consultation with the provinces, to initiate the process leading to the abolition of the Senate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

AGRICULTURE

AID TO FARMERS FACING FORECLOSURE

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. The Minister of Finance requested that individual cases be referred to when discussing farm bankruptcies in this House, and I would like to refer to a case from my constituency pertaining to a couple who have farmed for 40 years, paid off five bank mortgages during that period, raised nine children, some of whom have gone into agriculture, and were encouraged by a local lending organization to expand their operation in 1973.

In the last year and a half, Madam Speaker, this family have been faced with all their operating funds being cut off by their bank; their son has had his farm foreclosed by his bank; and now this family have been given 30 days' notice to repay their loan or face foreclosure. This leads to this couple, now of retirement age, selling their farm and their retirement home in Delhi, Ontario, to meet these demands. My question to the Prime Minister is this: what do you propose to do to help this couple and others like them in agriculture in Canada today?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I remember the Minister of Finance made an offer to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and I make the same offer to the hon. member. If he will forward the name to the minister he will see what he can do in talking to the banks about it.

An hon. Member: Can they all do that?

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOND PROGRAM

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, I am sure my colleagues on this side will forward all their letters again to the minister, as this letter has been forwarded both to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance without response. I would think, Madam Speaker, when a member of this House rises to ask a specific question appealing a case for some of his constituents to the Prime Minister, that possibly we could have an answer of substance.

My supplementary is that the Prime Minister will know that the Minister of Agriculture stated some three weeks ago that the small business development bond would be extended to include unincorporated small business and farms. Can he tell us if this is a fact, is it a reality, is it happening, or is it another Whelan pie-in-the sky statement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member expresses disappointment that he did not get an answer of substance. I think he is realistic enough to know that I could not possibly, without advance notice, know about a particular case of a particular family in one part of Canada and their troubles with the bank. That is why the Minister of Finance made the suggestion that if a particular case were drawn to his attention he would undertake to let the banks understand that this case had been drawn to his attention, and would ask them to exercise the kind of compassion that he talked to them about when he met them, with his colleagues, two weeks ago here in Ottawa.

As to the specific question of the hon. member, I think the Minister of Agriculture indicated this kind of consideration was one which had been drawn to the government's attention and to that of the minister, and that if he had any answer to it he would be making it known in this House.

● (1420)

GOVERNMENT AID TO PRODUCERS

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister, and it relates to the same topic of the problems farmers are having in financing. I also can refer to many cases from individual constituents who are having problems and going out of business, but I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he could hold out some hope in terms of government programs or assistance, or hope in the sense that interest rates would come down, to those people who have now either cut back on production or are in the process of going out of business, or those who have been forced to take jobs off the farm. In the process they are cutting back on