

*Supply*

generally. Before closing my remarks, Mr. Speaker, there is a program I should like to explain. I am thinking here of the program to increase the production of fodder in Quebec. An agreement was signed by our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and his provincial counterpart on last February 17. The federal-provincial agreement provides for the expenditure of \$33.5 million towards the implementation of four programs to help our Quebec producers improve their self-sufficiency in the area of fodder.

At the present time, Quebec produces only 34 per cent of the fodder crops it needs; the rest is imported from the Prairies, Ontario and even the United States. The federal government has committed itself to paying Quebec producers the total cost of those programs, that is a total amount of \$33.5 million, or \$6.7 million a year for the next five years starting on April 1, 1978. This program will end on May 31, 1983. Four programs are available to enable Quebec farmers to finance grain stocking facilities on the farm including silos, ventilation systems and corn dryers. Our producers may also benefit from subsidies for the purchase of grain harvesters, hay dryers and silos to improve the conservation quality and quantity of grain and fodder crops produced in Quebec. Those programs will be administered by the Quebec Department of Agriculture and the provincial offices in each area will maintain the liaison with producers.

Therefore, all farmers who wish to take part in those programs will be provided with forms and expertise by local offices of the Quebec Department of Agriculture as of April 1, 1978. A federal-provincial committee will supervise the general administration of those programs.

The federal government will pay to the Quebec consolidated fund an amount of \$6.7 million annually. The payments made to producers through Quebec will clearly show the contribution of the Canadian government, that is any cheque made to producers will come from federal funds for carrying out those four programs.

This is, Mr. Speaker, what I had to say concerning agriculture during consideration of Bill C-31 for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1979. If I insisted on agriculture it is because it is a vital sector of our society, agriculture being not only the concern of producers but also that of consumers and the Canadian government, has it can be noted, is very much aware of farming problems in Canada as very substantial funds are allotted to agriculture in the best interests of the people.

● (2012)

[English]

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to seek the unanimous consent of hon. members of the House in order to make a short statement. I understand the standing committee will be sitting in another room and there is an agreement

[Mr. Pinard.]

among its members that the meeting will reconvene some time after I have made my statement. As there was only one member from our side who spoke today perhaps I might be allowed to make my short statement, and that would make it possible for me to make myself available to committee members for interrogation on the bill which has to be concluded before the committee tonight.

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, I believe under the rules I was recognized prior to five o'clock and would probably have been finishing my remarks about now. However, I agreed to let the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader have the floor on the condition that I would be recognized after that. I am not interested in attempting to disrupt the business of the Minister of Finance but we are interested in putting some questions to him.

I would like to offer the minister the opportunity to speak now if he will agree that we go into committee of the whole after the completion of his remarks so that we might have an opportunity of quizzing him on the impact of the comments he intends to make. His remarks may not be long in duration, but probably important in terms of impact. Therefore we would like that opportunity.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order. The Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) on a point of order.

**Mr. Pinard:** Mr. Speaker, discussions on Bill C-31 began this afternoon and, except for myself, only members opposite have participated in the debate. Indeed, one Conservative member has spoken as well as the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and at seven minutes to five o'clock, I am the only government member who has been recognized this afternoon on that bill. I was allowed 40 minutes. I knew that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) wanted to make himself available for the Committee on Finance tonight and that is why I have shortened my speech and spoke for only about seven minutes. I was entitled to another half hour. I was expecting the same courtesy from the hon. member who spoke before me. I am quite surprised by his attitude, and given the circumstances, when he claims that he had been recognized before me this afternoon, he knows quite well that this was a mistake since no government member at that time had yet been recognized. Now, all I want from the hon. member is to be gentlemanlike and courteous and allow the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) to make his short statement and make himself available for the Committee on Finance before which he must appear.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** I recognize the hon. member for York-Simcoe on the same point of order.

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps there is some misunderstanding. Certainly our impression this afternoon was