

Oral Questions

Mr. Stevens: Over the Christmas break, in anticipation of members of the committee wanting certain material such as that to which the Hon. Member refers, we took the matter up with the various parties concerned, including Rimgate, Mr. Dornier, and the Boeing people. I am pleased to be able to tell Hon. Members that we are quite willing to make relevant documents available to the committee. The commercial sensitivity in certain documents will have to be excluded. However, subject to that type of matter, the letter of intent is something which we are quite willing to make available, as well as the summary of Arthur Andersen and the Royal-Lepage document. The APS market survey summary will also be available. I have a long list of various items which will be made available.

An Hon. Member: Table it!

Mr. Stevens: I understand members of the committee may meet this afternoon. I am waiting to hear from them as to the orderly way in which they would like to have this material made available, not just to Members of the House but to the public at large.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

BANKRUPTCY ACT

PROVISIONS AFFECTING FARMERS AND FISHERMEN

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. At the First Ministers' Conference in Halifax the Prime Minister announced that he would be amending the Bankruptcy Act to meet the needs of farmers facing insolvency. The Minister of Agriculture said it would be legislation with teeth and that it would be introduced on an urgent, priority basis, certainly before Christmas. Since the urgent action has not materialized, why has the Government decided to listen to the banks instead of the three Parties of in this House who in June of 1984 agreed to set up a procedure whereby farmers and fishermen would be able to obtain a third-party review and an imposed debt reduction?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it clear to the Hon. Member that this Government does not listen to the banks—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wise: —or, necessarily, to the opposition Parties. This Government listens to the farm organizations in the country, from which the best information is obtained.

I wish to set the record straight with respect to a couple of comments made by the Hon. Member. I have said it was our hope and our wish to be in a position prior to Christmas to introduce that piece of legislation. However, at the same time, being honest and frank with the farm communities across the

country, I have pointed out at each and every meeting that that timeframe just might not be possible to meet.

ROLE OF ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question concerns the same issue and it is for the Solicitor General. What instructions has the Solicitor General given to members of the RCMP who will accompany people posing as receivers on to farms, even though the supposed receivers have no legal documents giving them access to those farm properties? At the same time those same officers will not answer a call from a farmer who is in financial difficulty when he phones to obtain protection from people who are stalking his herds, machinery or grain. Does the Minister's Department have a policy with respect to this matter?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member has any specific case which he wishes to bring to my attention, I would be glad to have it investigated.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

INTEREST RATE LEVELS

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. On July 26, 1984, during the election campaign, the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre told *The Gazette* that the policy of jacking up interest rates to defend the dollar has consequences far more serious than a weakened dollar. Canadians will be surprised to know that the bank rate year-over-year in January, 1986, is higher than it was in January, 1985; January, 1984; and January, 1983. This January the bank rate is the highest January rate since 1982. Is it now the Government's policy to let interest rates go up to defend the dollar?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to the question is no. On September 4, 1984, the bank rate was 12.39 per cent. As the Hon. Member knows, right now it is over 2.5 percentage points lower than that. That is a clear indication of the direction of the policy of this Government.

I should draw to the Hon. Member's attention that as a former banker he should understand that interest rates fluctuate and that the key issue at which we should be looking is the results of this Government's policies. Some 450,000 jobs have been created since September 4, 1984. That is performance—something to which Canadians are responding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!