

Committee Reports

The Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills proposed sending this report back to the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. That committee is actually discussing this issue. The Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs is studying this issue now. We were there yesterday and we will be there next Monday to study the \$500 capital gains tax exemption. I do not know how this report can be sent back to the committee when the decision is going to be made on Monday.

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Glengarry-Pre-scott-Russell (Mr. Boudria), on questions or comments.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my hon. friend from Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) on his excellent speech, and I would like to ask—

[English]

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe the rules are clear that when we are into the ten-minute question and comment period, the time is to be distributed equally between the Parties. You have already recognized the Liberal Party for the first question, Mr. Speaker, and the next question should either go to the New Democratic Party or to the Government Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is quite correct in his interpretation of the rule. However, the only person I saw rise in the whole House to ask a question happened to be the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Pre-scott-Russell, and he has the floor.

Mr. Boudria: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to congratulate you on your ruling. It was very objective, as usual.

I have a question for the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau). Does he think it is appropriate for the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) to tell us that the economy of the farming sector "is doing better" at this point in time when the sugar-beet producers are going under in his riding, and when we have heard representation after representation from the constituency he represents telling us how badly the agricultural sector is doing under the Tory Government? Can the Hon. Member tell us specifically how anyone can say that the farming sector is doing better when there was a press release from the office of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), dated December 9, entitled "Farm Income Drops 14 per cent in 1985 to rise 1.6 per cent in 1986", when we know that the cost of living is going to increase by three or four times that much? Can the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides give us his opinion as to how the comments of the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills relate to the information I have just given?

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member gave the answer in his question. The only reason the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills spoke as he did is perhaps for partisan reasons, otherwise, I cannot see, after the 15 days I have spent in western Canada where I met with farmers, and after having

read, as the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Pre-scott-Russell (Mr. Boudria) did, the press release from the Department of Agriculture, how he could have spoken as he did. The Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) also spoke about borrowing, the debt, and the deficit. Unfortunately, I do not have time in this debate to comment on that. However, the Member may rest assured that if I had another 10 or 15 minutes I would be very pleased to discuss this and ask him a few questions about it.

● (1500)

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments in this debate. I think it is eminently logical for this motion to be before the House at this time. The report we are discussing was placed before the House in April. We were hopeful that it would be used in the Budget process and one of the recommendations made in the report was put into effect on May 24. We have waited for another six months and have seen no more action. I think it is, therefore, eminently logical for the motion for concurrence, which would instruct the House to take some action on the report, to be before the House at this time.

Before I go into the three issues which are considered in the report, I would like to say that we must look at the financing of agriculture. However, the financing of agriculture is only one issue. We should take a global look at agriculture. We should look at the costs of inputs, the cost of financing, and the price of the products that are being sold. We put band-aids on finance and other problems in farming, the net result being that we have an increasing number of bankruptcies every year.

The Government has often said that things are improving greatly because there are fewer bankruptcies this year than last. The reason for that is that once a fellow is bankrupt, he is bankrupt, and does not become another bankruptcy statistic the year after. Consequently, there are fewer farmers who can get into the position of finding it necessary to file for bankruptcy.

The Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) moved a motion which is obviously a delaying tactic. The Government does not want to vote on concurrence in something it does not want to put into effect even if it were concurred in by a majority of Government Members. The two members of the New Democratic Party were not entirely satisfied with what is in this report, but in order to give it the power of unanimity it seemed worth while to compromise to some extent and make it a unanimous report. It did not do us much good because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) took action on it only in the area of a capital gains tax exemption. It has been part of the New Democratic Party's policy for many years to have a \$400,000 capital gains exemption for farmers only, not for Florida condominiums or speculative stocks. We suggested that small businesses and farmers be allowed an exemption of up to \$400,000 as was recommended in this report.

The Hon. Member spoke of redundancy a little while ago. With that in mind we should take a good look at the amendment he moved to the motion. That amendment deals with the