

ed, but only the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) attended for the federal government. This confirms our opinion of the importance the federal Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) places on agriculture and related problems in Canada today. He could not care less. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid):

That this House direct the Prime Minister to remove the Minister of Finance from his post and replace him with someone who understands the problems facing farmers today and who is willing to listen to them.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

PENSIONS OF RETIRED MEMBERS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. The government has not kept its promise to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Treasury Board has stolen over \$100,000 from each and every RCMP member who retired between January 1 and March 31, 1981. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall):

● (1415)

That the salaries of the Treasury Board ministers be reduced to \$1 a year and that the savings thus effected be put in a special fund to compensate partially those who are the retired victims of the broken promises of this morally bankrupt government. The retired RCMP and their families deserve fair treatment, and ministers who dishonestly break their promises should be the ones who suffer, not the retired RCMP members and their families.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

INCREASE IN FARM BANKRUPTCIES—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance who will be aware of his colleague's, the Minister of Agriculture's statement last week wherein he called the 78 per cent increase in farm bankruptcies "a significant increase", an understatement indeed from this particular Minister of Agriculture. He also referred to a

Oral Questions

number of foreclosures and forced sales of farms. Of even greater concern are the much larger number of Canadian farmers who are withdrawing voluntarily from production rather than face the stigma of bankruptcy or foreclosure. In either case the result is the same: a loss of farm production.

I ask the minister what measures he proposes to take, and when will those measures be taken to attack this national disgrace?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as I have indicated several times in this House, I have held discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and will continue to do so with a view to determining whether any measures to assist could be taken in the present circumstances. If any such future measures are decided upon, they will be announced in the House at the appropriate time.

FARM CREDIT CORPORATION LOANS

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): My supplementary is also directed to the Minister of Finance, who said last week:

The truly sensitive person is the one who is thinking of the long-term interests of the Canadian people.

I point out to him that a farm withdrawn from production often takes years and years to regain its productive capacity. To avoid this, does the Minister of Finance agree with the Minister of Agriculture's proposal regarding the Farm Credit Corporation which was contained in that minister's letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* last week, and I quote:

—instituting a moratorium for three years on payments of interest and principal.

Is the minister in accord with his colleague's proposal?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as I indicated in the House earlier, I am not undertaking as a matter of daily practice to comment on the views of every person in the country who may make comments on the economy—

An hon. Member: This is not every person.

Mr. MacEachen: —and I have already dealt with that question—

Mr. Crosbie: Who speaks for the government?

Mr. MacEachen: —last week specifically addressed to me with respect to the letter in the newspaper by the Minister of Agriculture, by saying that I was holding discussions with him on the subject of the Farm Credit Corporation and if any changes were made as a result of these discussions, then of course the Minister of Agriculture would be making an announcement. However, I assure the hon. member that the difficulties that the farming population may be facing as a result of high interest rates are a matter of deep concern and the subject matter of discussions at the present time.