

Why do they not take some action by bringing in some reforms and assistance to keep farmers on the land?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I wish the Hon. Member would look at what we have been doing since we came to Government; he would see that we have set up a Farm Debt Review Committee, that we have kept interest rates under constant review and that they have been brought down significantly over the last three years—and you should be able to recognize that they were reduced to a significant point—this is a whole lot more than what you did when you were here, when interest rates were much higher.

We have no lessons to receive in that area, far from that. Concrete steps were taken.

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[*English*]

AIR CANADA

PRIVATIZATION—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. William C. Winegard (Guelph): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Privatization and relates to my comments earlier in the day about Air Canada.

I should like to ask the Minister whether it is still her intention to privatize Air Canada. If the answer to that question is yes, as I hope it is, I should like to know if it is also her intention to ensure that the employees of Air Canada are given an opportunity to purchase a significant percentage of the shares?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, let me say that what I have said about Air Canada to date is that it is under serious review. I have not said that it is my intention to privatize it. I have said that it is under review. That review is continuing.

I might point out that it took Britain five years to get to a big privatization. We are moving much more quickly on ours. We have done 11.

However, in answer to the second part of the Hon. Member's question, let me say that the employees of Teleglobe and of FBI in Newfoundland, who are very happy shareholder-employees, are a good example of the kind of thing we would want to do in the future.

Oral Questions

CANADA POST CORPORATION

HIRING OF STRIKE-BREAKERS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Post Office.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Canada Post has already started advertising for strike-breakers. In view of what happened during the last postal strike, has the Minister not learned that the hiring of strike-breakers probably will create violence on the picket lines? Has the time not come to act in a more civilized way and abandon this policy of hiring strike breakers?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my position on that is very similar to the position expressed by the Hon. Member's colleague, the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville, who said on June 18 of this year, when discussing whether to allow the Post Office to continue operating during a strike: "it is a very tough issue because you have two conflicting realities. The postal workers must be treated fairly and justly but other Canadians must continue to receive their mail".

That is a pretty good description of the situation. The position of the Government is very clear. The social responsibility of the Post Office is something we ask of management. We expect both sides to obey the law, and it is illegal, contrary perhaps to the position of the New Democratic Party, to use violence in pursuit of objectives in Canada.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I resent the implication that the NDP is advocating anything that is illegal.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will put his question, keeping in mind the time.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, what I would like to know from the Minister is whether he and his Government are capable of learning from experience. Does he not think that a Government has more responsibility, a responsibility beyond condemning violence and, in fact, a responsibility to put in place policies that will avoid violence, that will ensure we can have negotiated settlements which people can understand? Does he not think that Canadian society has a measure of civilization and that we do not stoop to the level of—

● (1500)

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Somewhere in that tirade, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did say that we should seek a negotiated solution. On