

*Oral Questions*

meet with the two presidents? When is he actually going to accomplish something to save these farmers and 100,000 Canadian jobs?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is very well aware that the Prime Minister has been very much engaged in this issue for a number of years now, going back before the 1986 summit.

The Prime Minister met with farm leaders, went straight to the Tokyo summit and put agricultural issues on the summit table for the first time. That has continued at every summit since then. It also continues at a number of other meetings that the Prime Minister is involved in, some of which are not related to agriculture but the Prime Minister brings those matters up at the meetings because of the seriousness with which he views these agricultural issues. He has raised this matter with other G-7 leaders.

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**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. René Soetens (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been involved in some very extensive consultations with numerous people, not only the first ministers in a very public meeting here in Ottawa, but through numerous other consultations. Even in this House the government gets lots of free advice on the budget.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he has completed his consultation process and is he ready to announce the date of that budget?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I can advise my hon. colleague and the House that it is my intention to bring a budget down on Tuesday, February 25.

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[*Translation*]

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Agriculture and concerns the government's position on protecting marketing boards and article XI.

What we want to know from the government is not all the meetings that were held, the trips to Europe, the telephone calls with our European friends and how long the calls lasted. That is not what we want to know, Mr. Speaker. What we want to know, and I ask the minister, is whether he is prepared on behalf of the government to refuse to sign any agreement that would not maintain article XI and marketing boards.

**Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)):** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly not compete with the hon. member for the number of times we have been to Europe. I know that he would win in that department.

• (1450)

However, I will not allow the member for Lac-Saint-Jean to play politics on the backs of Quebec farmers. Since 1990, when we tabled the Canadian position, it has not changed. It was restated today, and in a common effort, which I hope my colleague will support us in, we offered farm leaders a chance to go with a group of government ministers to Europe to restate the Canadian position once more. There is no difference, no division on the Canadian position. There is no division. Our position is clear. The Prime Minister reaffirmed it this morning. I think that should reassure the hon. member.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean):** What the minister is telling us, Mr. Speaker, is that he gave farm leaders an opportunity to go with him to Geneva to share the blame for this government's failure with him. The question is simple and I would ask the minister as well not to play politics. Here is a simple question that all farmers in Canada are now asking: Will the government sign an agreement rejecting article XI and marketing boards or will it not?

**Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have always said we would defend farmers' interests and the facts are there to prove it. But if my hon. colleague absolutely wants to frighten Quebec farmers, he should rather tell them about the risks of separation for a province and for Quebec farmers who produce 50 per cent of Canada's industrial milk. That danger is much greater. The risk that you would have Quebec farmers run is much greater and farmers