

Oral Questions

Speaker, in answer to the Hon. Member for Oxford, I am pleased to report to him, to his constituents and to Members of the House, that when the report is delivered to the Minister it is the intention of the Minister to make such report public. As to his concern about whether the members of the committee can hold a press conference to discuss their findings during the hearings, I will bring it to the attention of the Minister, and he will respond to the Hon. Member directly.

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CANADA PENSION PLAN**HOMEMAKER'S PENSION PROPOSAL**

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the Government's consensus package on reforms to the Canada Pension Plan. Specifically, for the first time it excludes inclusion of a homemaker's pension plan in the common package which will be presented to Finance Ministers tonight at their meeting in Toronto. Will he explain to the women of Canada why his Government is backing off its election campaign promise to include retroactively a homemaker's plan in our public pension plan system?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the appropriate Minister, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, I am afraid that I will have to take that question as notice. I will make sure that a response to the question is given to the Hon. Member as soon as possible.

INTRODUCTION OF BENEFIT IMPROVEMENTS

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question, and I think the Deputy Prime Minister should answer it. In terms of the consensus package, why in heaven's name would the Government, knowing that a large percentage of Canada Pension Plan disability recipients live below the poverty line, adopt the position of phasing in the improvements to the benefits package over five years, rather than introducing a comprehensive plan in 1986, as recommended by our own parliamentary task force on pension reform?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the more the Hon. Member speaks, the more I am sure he is absolutely wrong in his premise. Nonetheless, I will take notice of the question. I know that the Government has given leadership in terms of pension reform unequalled in the history of the country. I will make sure that the Minister gets back to him and gives him more detail about that progress than he cares to hear.

AGRICULTURE**PLIGHT OF FARMERS IN DROUGHT ZONE**

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. He will know that we have been waiting 12 weeks for the report from the Hon. Member for Assiniboia on what action will be taken by the Government in the drought zone. Part of that zone is now under snow in the Peace River block. Farmers have waited long enough. Will there or will there not be special assistance for those farmers?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will know, and the record will show, that the Government always responds effectively to the problems facing the agricultural industry. I know that he asks this question from time to time. Again I am sure that we will not disappoint Canadian farmers this time. The only thing I can say to him is that, if it was four days ago that he asked that question, we are four days closer to an announcement.

FARM FORECLOSURES—REQUEST THAT MORATORIUM BE EXTENDED

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, if there is not to be financial assistance to farm incomes, will the Government be extending its moratorium on farm foreclosures, which now only covers FCC foreclosures, to other lending institutions? Will there be a judicial procedure offered similar to the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act in the very near future so that farmers will not be faced with the unfairness of foreclosure as it exists now?

● (1450)

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member asked two questions. I would like to remind him that I did not say that there would not be financial assistance forthcoming. With respect to his second suggestion, it is one of the recommendations that we are currently studying, and indeed I take notice of the fact that it was one of the recommendations that was put forward to us by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. We regard that organization as a very credible organization representing the agricultural industry.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**GENERAL MOTORS OF CANADA—PROPOSED TRANSFER OF PRODUCTION TO UNITED STATES AND MEXICO**

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and, in the absence of that Minister, to the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday it was reported that a General Motors of Canada spokesman confirmed that that company intends to transfer production from its plants in Oshawa, St. Catharines, and Windsor to the United States and Mexico by