

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I put the welfare of farmers ahead of any kind of a campaign.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: As long as the agricultural economy is healthy, the rest of the country goes that way.

Mr. Nystrom: When?

Mr. Whelan: He keeps asking when, Mr. Speaker. Soon.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CYPRUS—PROPOSALS ADVANCED BY UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs. Does the Government of Canada support the recent proposals of UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar for gradual steps toward the reunification of Cyprus, including the return of privately-owned properties near Famagusta, at Varosha, to their rightful owners in the Republic of Cyprus?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Government of Canada has consistently been that the taking of territory in Cyprus is not subject to recognition. The present situation is not based on international recognition or acceptance. It therefore follows that efforts by the UN to bring about a restoration to the conditions and structure on the island, as it previously existed, would be a positive step in that direction. We are watching the Secretary General's initiatives with great interest.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister will do more than watch that initiative.

PRESENCE OF TURKISH TROOPS ON CYPRUS

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, recognizing that the continued partition of Cyprus represents a serious threat to relations between Greece and Turkey, which could lead to a dangerous impairment of the NATO Alliance in the northern Mediterranean, what representation is the Canadian Government making in Ankara and Washington to facilitate the early withdrawal of 30,000 Turkish troops from Cyprus?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is aware of the fact that Canada's commitment to peace and stability in Cyprus is a rather considerable one. We have had a peace-keeping force there for some 20 years. Our position is well known in Ankara and Washington concerning the destabilization of the previous situation in Cyprus by the military action of a number of years ago. Certainly in Ankara and Washington it is known exactly what is our position.

Oral Questions

AGRICULTURE

SITUATION OF YOUNG FARMERS IN MANITOBA

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Agriculture. In response to a recent question he said he was going to take action soon to bring in a payout plan under the Western Grain Stabilization Program. I have spent much of this past weekend meeting and talking with farmers. Young farmers are being forced off the land. Since this last weekend two of those young farmers are no longer farming. They have been forced off within the last 24 hours. Is the Minister's Government unable or unwilling to do anything to prevent the loss of an entire generation of younger farmers?

● (1450)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to say that it is one Minister's or one government's fault, when the previous Government of Manitoba did not do very much either. Agriculture is a joint responsibility. The Hon. Member should consider the amount of money we have loaned people in Manitoba to assist them with advance payments, et cetera. To say that the Government can be the saviour of everyone in that area is not correct. That is what the Member seems to be suggesting in his question.

I met with the Farm Credit people yesterday. I received letters from the Hon. Member's constituency and I also spoke to him. If he has any suggestion on how to save these people, would he please come forward with them? The people from Manitoba are now suggesting by letter that the Government assume ownership of the land, rent it back to the farmers, and then, if the farms become economically viable entities, they be allowed to purchase them. That is what the farmers themselves are writing. I received several letters yesterday suggesting that.

FARM CREDIT CORPORATION INTEREST LEVELS

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, trying to pass the buck to the Government of Manitoba in this case is no answer. The farmers want action, and they want it now.

The Minister asked for suggestions. There are two specific things he can do. First of all, if he is willing, he can persuade the Minister of Finance, who for some reason seems very unconcerned about the plight of western Canadian farmers, to abolish the present system of charging 16 per cent and 16.75 per cent on long term Farm Credit Corporation loans. The second thing he can do, if he is willing and able, is persuade the Minister of Finance to abolish the tax on farm fuels.

Mr. Speaker: Will the Hon. Member ask his supplementary question?

Mr. Clark (Brandon-Souris): Will the Minister make those presentations to the Minister of Finance?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member would like, I am sure we can have a briefing arranged for him by the Farm Credit people who are