

Oral Questions

propane and the lack of that commodity in eastern Canada, particularly in Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I think the first part of my reply answered that particular supplementary.

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[Translation]

THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION**TRANSFER TO PROVINCES OF JURISDICTION OVER MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice, but since the senator-minister does not sit in this House, I will put it to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations.

At the last first ministers' conference, the previous government, in its desire to decentralize power, agreed with the unanimous consent of the provinces to surrender to them the authority in matters of marriage and divorce. Will the minister tell us if his government intends to carry out this transfer very soon and hence do away with the scattering of jurisdictions?

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, I am just coming out of a conference with my provincial counterparts responsible for constitutional matters which was held last Monday and Tuesday in Halifax. This government's position is the same as that taken by the former government. In Halifax, I took the same stand and I think we just about all agree on it now.

I believe there will be a meeting of four ministers in November and I hope to settle that issue before the conference of first ministers. I am not sure I can do so, but I am hoping.

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NARCOTICS**REQUEST THAT POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA BE DECRIMINALIZED**

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, since the minister is in such good spirits, I should like to ask him whether he intends to introduce, on behalf of his government, as early as this fall, a bill to reduce the penalties in the case of simple possession of marijuana as well as a bill creating the office of ombudsman, and whether he has looked into their financial implications?

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, that bill is now the responsibility of the Minister of Justice, who, in fact, is now in the process of consulting his cabinet colleagues. I am not sure whether or not

[Mr. Massé.]

that bill will be introduced during this session, but it is a policy we are now looking at.

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● (1500)

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**INCREASE IN INTEREST RATE—EFFECT ON FARMING COMMUNITY**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): My question is to the right hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, and it is on the 14 per cent rate of usury in this country. I think the Prime Minister knows that the increase in the rate of usury, or the rate of interest in this country adds immensely to the farm debt, and the farmers need money to expand their farm operations, buy equipment and purchase land and if they do not get it we may have some shortages in the production of food.

The question I want to ask the Prime Minister is the following: can he give us a commitment today that it is not the intention of the government to privatize the Farm Credit Corporation but, instead, expand its financing to provide loans to farmers at lower interest rates?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are very much interested in helping Canadian farmers, through a variety of means which are under consideration by this government, to expand their operations and to secure a position in which their security as operators will help this country to develop the very real resource we have as a food-producing nation.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is learning very rapidly from the Leader of the Opposition. I want him to answer the question. Can the Prime Minister give us a commitment today that he will not privatize the Farm Credit Corporation but, instead, will expand it and make sure we have more money available to farmers at low interest rates? Will he give us the commitment that he will not privatize the Farm Credit Corporation?

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, we are certainly not planning to privatize the Farm Credit Corporation.

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POINT OF ORDER**MR. PAPROSKI—LOTO CANADA—CLARIFICATION OF ANSWER DURING QUESTION PERIOD**

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, my point of order has to do with a question asked by the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) which appears at page 551 of *Hansard* for yesterday. It arises from a difficulty in the