

S. O. 21

IMMIGRATION

VOLUNTEER GROUP'S EFFORTS TO SECURE DEPORTATION OF
LANDED IMMIGRANTS CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission—Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to draw attention to an issue of great importance to all Canadians. There is a group of concerned citizens in British Columbia who, under the leadership and motivation of Mrs. Christine Mellin, are giving tirelessly of their time and energy to ensure that the safety of all Canadians is maintained. Their cause is the immediate deportation of individuals who have landed immigrant status in Canada and who have been convicted of criminal activities.

I am proud of these people's selfless efforts on behalf of all Canadians and I would like to reassure them that we, as a Government, recognize the serious nature of this issue. Given the excellent work of the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) in protecting the rights of Canadians through recent changes to immigration policies, I am sure that he will give serious attention to the concerns of those I am representing here today. Evidence of their commitment is demonstrated by the more than 4,000 signatures on this petition that I hold in my hand.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, Canada's agricultural crisis grows worse every day. The total farm debt in Canada in 1985 amounted to \$21.6 billion. One year later, at the end of 1986, it had climbed to \$22.5 billion and is still rising. In Ontario, Canada's most prosperous province, my province, the farm debt stands at \$5.2 billion, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to note that farmers owe ever more to the Farm Credit Corporation and that 22.2 per cent of payments are late. Mr. Speaker, I might point out that in 1982, the worst recession year, 410 farm bankruptcies were recorded in Canada. In 1986, with a Conservative Government which claims to have done so much for the agricultural community, the number of farm bankruptcies went up to 440. The situation is intolerable and I insist that the Conservative Government come to the assistance of Canadian agricultural producers.

● (1410)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

REDUCTION IN BANK RATE—CREDIT CARD COMPANIES' HIGH
INTEREST CHARGES

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the bank rate has plunged again. It has just been announced that it has dropped to a rate of 7.14 per cent. That is one reason the press can say that foreign investors just love Canada. It is a good place to do business again.

We must also be aware that the spread between the bank rate and the prime rate is now wider than it was last week. The challenge to the banks and lending institutions is to bring that prime rate down so it can benefit business people and consumers still more, and particularly credit card users.

The credit card rate is the same as it was when the prime rate was over 20 points. One must ask if the bank rate has to come down to nothing before credit card consumers will benefit.

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IMMIGRATION

SITUATION OF CHILEANS IN BUENOS AIRES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the 85 Chileans barred from Canada by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) are trapped in Buenos Aires. They cannot come to Canada and dare not return to Chile. They report recognizing Chilean secret police menacing them on the streets of Buenos Aires. After exhausting their money and the church aid available, they have slept in a park for two nights and live on the streets. They are drinking the non-potable water available there but are lacking money for food. Some of these people are children under the age of two.

The Canadian chargé d'affaires is quoted by *The Globe and Mail* as saying: "If they've been sleeping in the streets, it's because they've chosen to do so". What a disgrace to Canada's foreign service. She sounds like a direct descendant of Marie "Let-Them-Eat-Cake" Antoinette. Ms. Herrera of the UNHCR sounds more realistic. She has said: "You only have to talk to them to know they are destroyed, that they are afraid to return". What is the Minister's problem with Chileans? Is none too many?