

*Oral Questions*

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

● (1415)

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### HOUSING

#### INCREASE IN NUMBER OF EVICTIONS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF RENT

**Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the Minister of Finance advised home owners and farmers who face foreclosure to talk to the banks about their situation. Whatever the merits of that particular policy, the minister avoided saying anything whatsoever about tenants. Even the minister must be aware that evictions are radically increasing across the country. In Toronto, alone, during the first four months of 1981, people in 1,081 units were evicted. What advice does the Minister of Finance have for those people?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member totally misunderstood the nature of my remarks yesterday on the subject of the impact of high interest rates on various groups in the community. I stated that I had a meeting with the representatives of The Canadian Bankers' Association, and they assured me that the banking institutions would lean over backwards in attempting to assist hardship cases in the present circumstances. That is quite different from his comment to the effect that I had given advice to various people to go to see the bankers. That was not the nature of my comment.

#### QUERY RESPECTING INTRODUCTION OF SHELTER ALLOWANCE PROGRAM

**Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance may then recall that on March 6, 1981, his colleague, the minister responsible for housing, said:

The time had clearly come for all of those truly interested in the meeting of people's housing needs to seriously consider the idea of a shelter allowance.

That was stated many months ago. There has been no talk of a shelter allowance since that time. It is clear that the Minister of Finance does not agree with the minister responsible for housing, because it is somewhere close to the bottom in the government's list of priorities. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would reconsider his policy and put shelter allowances back up in a top priority, where it belongs.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has referred to a comment made by the minister responsible for housing that a shelter allowance is something which ought to be considered. I agree with him on that matter, and it has been

considered. When it comes to the point where financial circumstances would permit the Government of Canada to finance a shelter allowance, I will, of course, be pleased to make an announcement in the House; but at the present time, in view of the constant—

**Mr. Clark:** Money you are spending on Petrofina.

**Mr. MacEachen:**—exhortations that I am being given by his colleagues on the other side to restrain government expenditures, I would not want to go against that overwhelming advice from the other side.

**Mr. Clark:** Maybe Maurice Strong would contribute.

**Mr. Crosbie:** The record is getting worn out, Allan.

**Mr. MacEachen:** So are the questions.

#### INCREASE IN HOUSE PRICES

**Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale):** The minister may be happy with that response, but I can assure him that tenants are not. I would also like to remind the minister that everyone in this country knows that low income people are being hurt by his policies. What the minister must also know is that middle income people are increasingly feeling the squeeze, and they are feeling it hard. The average price for a home in Vancouver is now \$135,000. For a single mortgage—

**An hon. Member:** One hundred and sixty.

**Mr. Crombie:**—on an average home in Toronto one needs \$36,000. Middle income people are renegotiating mortgages at a current record rate. People are now paying \$300 and \$400 more every month. I would like to ask the minister whether the best he can say to the middle-income Canadians is, "Go see the banks." Is that it? Is that the government's policy?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** No, Madam Speaker, that is the hon. member's rhetoric.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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● (1420)

## AGRICULTURE

#### INCREASE IN FARM BANKRUPTCIES IN ONTARIO

**Hon. John Wise (Elgin):** Madam Speaker, my question is in the same general subject area and it is directed to my friend, the Minister of Agriculture. It refers to farm bankruptcies, foreclosures, and forced sales. Farm bankruptcies in Ontario have increased by 90 per cent, year over year and foreclosures and forfeit sales have increased ten times. The minister gives commitments, and the minister does not fulfil commitments; he gives promises and he breaks promises. When can we expect at least one single piece of legislation before it is too late?