

S. O. 31

clearly we are on the road to recovery, there is still much uncertainty and consumers are still reluctant to resume their normal spending patterns.

As we work to put the great constitutional uncertainty behind us, I urge all political leaders to address as well the economic issues that are foremost in the minds of Atlantic Canadians.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, the federal government must take immediate steps to alleviate the problems facing the prairie agricultural economy. In addition to continuing low prices and a tax on the market place, the prairies have been hit by drought, cool weather, frost, and in some areas snow.

The federal government has the responsibility to initiate support programs for disaster areas. Many rural municipalities throughout Saskatchewan and Alberta have asked to be designated disaster areas.

I remember clearly an old campaign promise: Farmers have to fight the weather; they should not have to fight the government. This year truer words were never spoken.

I call on the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance and the government to announce immediately the extension of the interest-free cash advance program and a new disaster relief program to accommodate the desperate needs outlined so well by the rural municipalities and the farmers of western Canada.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, most of us return to this House today with mixed feelings. Although we had important events and people to see in our ridings, we are pleased that the constitutional discussions have progressed to the point of agreement.

In spite of the weather, it has been a good summer for Canadians. The Canada 125 celebration and the Voyageurs program for youth have helped to fan the flames of patriotism.

Canadians have had enough of the constitutional discussions and are now prepared to respond to the agreement reached by the first ministers. There are those who oppose the agreement because they want no agreement. Others will stand firm because it is not exactly the way they would write it.

It is not exactly what I want either. There are changes I would prefer, but we cannot have individual constitutions. This agreement is the result of extensive consultation. All Canadians have had the opportunity to express themselves. It is time to accept that this is the best compromise we are going to reach. It is time to put the question to Canadians and to turn the page.

* * *

METRO TORONTO

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the economic plight of metro Toronto has truly reached chronic proportions. While the government continues to take a hands-off approach, Canadians in Toronto are paying a particularly high price for this cavalier attitude.

The unemployment rate in Toronto has reached its highest level since the Great Depression: 11.7 per cent. Two hundred and forty-four thousand people are without jobs, more than double the number of only two years ago.

When you also add the number of people who have given up looking for work and the replacement of full-time jobs by part-time work, you regrettably have a Toronto which has been brought to its economic knees.

Metro Toronto's leadership role in the country's economy has been grossly mismanaged and allowed to deteriorate to an all-time low.

I urge this government to immediately put the brakes to this stagnation by exercising the levers to effectively stimulate the Toronto economy and thereby create the jobs and consumer confidence that is badly needed.

For this Conservative government to watch this unravel and do absolutely nothing is the height of political irresponsibility.