

Oral Questions

religious publication, received the following letter from the Chairman of Canada Post concerning its second-class mailing privileges:

Upon a careful reading of the publication you have submitted in your application, I am unable to conclude that the content of *Canada Lutheran* is "devoted primarily" to one or more of the subjects enumerated in paragraph (b). Therefore I must conclude that your publication is best described by paragraph (a). As such, the exception provided by paragraph (i) is unavailable to you and your application is subject to the provisions of paragraph (h).

Your application fails because paragraph (h) takes away second class entitlement from any publication described in paragraph (a), if it is published by someone whose principal business is other than publishing and it is published for the purpose of advancing the publisher's principal business. When interpreting paragraph (h), it is important to note that the term "business" does not have a strictly commercial connotation. In the context of the Regulations, it is to be interpreted as the principal activity or purpose of the entity in question.

That clears it all up.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

FARM CREDIT CORPORATION—ENDING OF MORATORIUM ON FARM FORECLOSURES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian grain economy is collapsing. Farm families are breaking up under the stress and strain of that pressure. Farm groups tell us that the situation is as bad as it was during the Great Depression. Yet this is the time chosen by the Government of Canada to start foreclosing on farms, kicking farmers off the land and kicking farmers when they are down.

Will the Prime Minister immediately reverse yesterday's mean-spirited decision by the Minister of Agriculture to start foreclosing on Canadian farms?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, and we on this side realize it, that it is a serious matter for Canadian agriculture. The federal Government has taken many initiatives to address that problem but let me try to put into perspective, if I can, the situation with the Farm Credit Corporation.

There are approximately 225,000 commercial farms in Canada. The announcement of the lifting of the foreclosure moratorium will affect approximately 50 farmers per month. By the way, those farmers have the option of having their cases referred to farm debt review boards or other programs this Government has initiated. So that a year from now, if the process goes ahead as planned, it will affect at the maximum about one-quarter of 1 per cent of all commercial farms in Canada.

• (1420)

In the meantime the federal Government is providing substantial financial assistance to farmers to see them through this very, very difficult time in the international grain markets.

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT ASKED TO GUARANTEE FARMERS DECENT STANDARD OF LIFE AND JUST PRICES FOR GRAIN CROPS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last week the Government reduced the preliminary price for grain by 18 per cent. This week, it has started turning farmers off their farms. These measures are stupid and unfair and are destroying a whole way of life on the family farm. When will the Prime Minister guarantee our farmers a decent standard of living and a fair price for their produce, especially for grain?

[*English*]

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I hope the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition will put it in perspective and consider the facts. I say again that one year from now the lifting of the moratorium will affect at a maximum one-quarter of 1 per cent of all commercial farms.

The Hon. Member talks about stupid and unfair. One of the reasons we are in this situation is because of the stupid, ignorant and unfair policies of the previous Government—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mayer: —in bringing in a high interest rate policy which put farmers in the position they're in today.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after all those Tory promises why do it now? Why kick the farmer when he is down? Why reduce grain prices? Why start foreclosing on farms? Why now, and why all at the same time?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, we recognize this is a serious matter. The Minister of Agriculture has put in place several options farmers can consider. One of them is the farm debt review boards. Another one is the Canadian Rural Transition Program. The FCC has initiated two other interest rate programs which reduce interest rates for farmers. All of this is an attempt to deal with this very difficult situation. All of those programs are up and operating. They will be of use to farmers in this very difficult time.

Might I say that we are taking an entirely different approach under the leadership of the Prime Minister by trying to solve the problem internationally? That is in great contrast to a previous Prime Minister who came to western Canada and told us to sell our own wheat.