

Oral Questions

REVIEW BOARDS INQUIRY

An Hon. Member: Go ahead. Go ahead.

Mr. Caccia: —he would defend the long-term interests of Canadians in health and water by demanding the incineration of toxic chemicals in the dump sites along the Niagara River. Will he do that?

An Hon. Member: Yes or no?

Mr. Crosbie: Time you woke up, Caccia. Where were you all these years?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, no one on this side of the House needs to take a back seat to the Hon. Member in the moral outrage that we feel toward those who pollute our rivers from which Canadians derive their drinking water. He accuses me of bringing coolness to the debate. I suggest to him that he might be well advised to bring an element of coolness to the debate himself because, if he did so, he would recognize that this Government has done more in 12 months of being in office—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McMillan: —than the previous Government did in 12 years.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): You never answered the question.

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FARM CREDIT CORPORATION

MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Rock bottom crop prices and high interest rates were going to force the Farm Credit Corporation to close down 670 farms this fall, so the Minister moved to put a moratorium on FCC foreclosures. But my question to the Minister is this: what will this moratorium lead to, how long will it last, and will he extend it to non-FCC loans as well?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition and, I gather, the support for my decision in the early part of September to place a moratorium on FCC foreclosures. I indicated at the time that it would be in place indefinitely and I also indicated that at the same time we instructed a study of the role and mandate of the Farm Credit Corporation. This is the first time that such a study has been done for the last 25 years. I now have those recommendations, they are being evaluated, and I would expect in the not too distant future we will be making some decisions with respect to appropriate further measures that might well be taken to help alleviate this very, very difficult situation in which many Canadian farmers find themselves.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, there is a tremendous urgency about this problem. I have thousands of signatures here that demonstrate the concern. There are perhaps 50,000 farmers who, according to FCC figures, are facing severe financial distress.

Will the Minister act now on the results of the Grey-Bruce study and establish a system of judicial review boards with power to hear cases and implement settlements to help these 50,000 farmers? Otherwise they will be chased off the land and we will lose the agricultural production that is so crucial to the future of the country.

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, there is no question about the fact, and I have said it in this House and across the country and to the many agri-food organizations that I meet day in and day out, that it certainly is a recognition of this Government that the financial situation in the primary sector of the agricultural industry is indeed a very difficult one, perhaps one of the toughest we have been through in the last 50 years.

I do think the Hon. Member's figure of some 50,000 farmers who are facing immediate foreclosure or bankruptcy is somewhat exaggerated. As I indicated to him, we still have in place across the country the Farm Credit review boards. They are acting in a voluntary capacity and they are doing an excellent job. One of the recommendations that I am looking at is something in the nature of what the Hon. Member is suggesting.

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[*Translation*]

SHIPBUILDING

PRODUCTION OF EQUIPMENT FOR FRIGATES—JOB CREATION IN MONTREAL

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

In this morning's *Le Devoir*, we read the following headline: "Paramax Inc. ahead of schedule in production of equipment for Canadian frigates". The company will employ 500 hi-tech workers. The impact on the employment rate is expected to be very positive in the Montreal area.

Could the Minister inform the House whether his department intends to take steps to accelerate the process of getting these jobs for the people of Montreal?

[*English*]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Good morning.

Mr. Nunziata: Sorry we woke you up.