

POLITICAL PARTIES

CONDEMNATION OF LIBERAL PARTY'S POLICIES ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian embassy in Tokyo is trying to promote Japanese tourism in Canada by running a so-called beauty contest, in which Japanese women are being asked to send photos of themselves, and their physical measurements, to the Canadian embassy. The winner is to be awarded a tour of Canada. While it is a worth-while endeavour to promote tourism, this approach is entirely offensive and hearkens back to the dark ages.

It does, however, point once again to the glaring gap between the platitudes the Liberals pay to women's issues and their policies and actions. For instance, the Government was willing to make companies which had contracts with the federal Government comply with the six and five program when it came to wages, yet it will not bring in contract compliance to promote affirmative action programs within those same companies.

The Liberals are willing to intervene and regulate the broadcasting industry when it comes to ensuring Canadian content. But when it comes to protecting women against sexually abusive broadcasting, the Government says it is the CRTC's responsibility. A warning to all Canadians, but in particular to Canadian women: to be a Conservative is to reveal nothing at all about one's policies; to be a Liberal means to preach one thing and practise another.

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• (1415)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT MINISTER ACCEDE TO DEMAND FOR AID

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Last April 10, Mr. Speaker, some Government Members were pleased to see that the Minister of Agriculture had met with the association of Quebec producers concerning the huge loss incurred by Quebec farmers as a result of bad weather conditions last summer. The Minister said that financial assistance would be available to Quebec farmers on the condition that the Quebec Minister of Agriculture—or the Quebec Government through its Minister of Agriculture—make direct representations to Agriculture Canada. On April 16 last, the Minister of Agriculture of Quebec did make the necessary representations to explain that Quebec farmers deserved that assistance, considering that the federal Government had been extremely generous for western farmers in 1980. Given those circumstances and the fact that the Canadian Minister of Agriculture has received that very clear and straightforward message, I dare hope that Government Members will make every effort to convince the Minister of Agriculture of Canada to respond favourably, keeping in mind the good faith and good will

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shown by Quebec's Agriculture Minister in the interest of farmers. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Agriculture to give a positive response to the request of his Quebec colleague, in the interest of Quebec farmers.

Mr. Dubois: Did you read Mr. Garon's letter?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND REPORT—SIZE OF EXTERNAL DEBT

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Canada has set another record. We have now been singled out by the International Monetary Fund as one of the industrial nations which has an unwelcome set of options, and whose problems are among the worst of those nations which have a rising government debt.

In 1973 our total external debt was \$16.4 billion owed by the Governments and the people of Canada, outside Canada. Today it is \$127.4 billion. The IMF says that, in relation to the current value of national output, by far the largest interest payments are those of Italy and Canada. They are equal to 9 per cent and 7 per cent of the gross domestic product.

What steps does the Government plan to take to resolve this fantastic debt problem which we now have in Canada, which originated in 1973 when Mr. John Turner was Minister of Finance, and has continued with every Minister of Finance since? When is the Government going to cease putting this country in hock, and reverse this situation? Is the outrageous debt record of the Government not the basic reason for the weakness of the Canadian dollar today?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I must tell my hon. friend that his slip is showing. Frankly, his fears are appearing rather obviously, in face of the outstanding candidates who are vying for the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Mr. McDermid: Just name one.

Mr. Lalonde: I addressed this issue in my last two budget speeches in particular, and in the economic statement I issued in November of 1982. As I have stated, it is important that we proceed to a gradual reduction of our deficit so as not to find ourselves in a situation where there would be some crowding out, or where a large part of the federal Government's expenditures would be for interest payments. I have indicated a step of a gradual reduction in the deficit.

I can inform my friend, for instance, that we have performed even better than I had anticipated in that regard. Last year, for instance, I had foreseen that the federal Government