

Oral Questions
AGRICULTURE

REFINANCING OF CO-OPERATIVE IMPLEMENTS OF WINNIPEG

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Madam Speaker, my question is for the flowering Minister of Agriculture, regarding the refinancing of the farmer-owned, Winnipeg-based, Co-operative Implements Ltd. The minister is no doubt well aware of the \$35 million refinancing package which is being put together for this western farm machinery company. It includes the assistance of the three prairie provinces, the organizations within the co-operative movement, and the owners of Co-operative Implements themselves, the farmers. Will the government be announcing its participation in this package, particularly in light of the assistance which was given to companies such as Massey-Ferguson, Chrysler and White?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the hon. member made comment about the flower I am wearing. This is because of the importance which Agriculture Canada places on the floral industry.

An hon. Member: Is it real or plastic?

Mr. Whelan: It is very real. It is a very important industry. The chrysanthemum show has two more days to run at the Experimental Farm in Ottawa. If the hon. member wants to learn more about what is going on, let him go and see. I am sure he realizes that it always pays to advertise.

When the hon. member talks about Co-operative Implements, he should realize that it would have been closed over three years ago if it had not been for the action of the government in providing an interest-free loan for \$7 million when the other people were not doing very much about it. We had to beg the provinces to come into it. We are negotiating with them on what we think is a very good program for Co-operative Implements. I am not sure whether or not it will go ahead, but we know that over-all there are 3,000 jobs involved and that the money we provided was \$7 million interest free. That money, interest free, amounts to nearly \$3 million, so we have already put \$10 million into that program. We are prepared to ensure, to the best of our ability, that this plant stays in operation.

AMOUNT OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Madam Speaker, the minister's emblems extend to his speeches. By way of a supplementary question I should like to ask the minister to confirm that the amount of the federal government's support will be \$14 million, which was requested, rather than the \$7.5 million previously negotiated. This amount will ensure that Co-operative Implements will continue to operate. Given the support of \$360 million to Massey-Ferguson, Chrysler and White, this seems like a paltry amount to keep a Canadian farmer-owned western implement company going.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the first part of the hon. member's statement was

rather flowery. I am glad to see that he has come into the picture late concerning Co-operative Implements. I am glad he realizes that there is a Canadian farm implement manufacturing company which is doing a very good job, as far as I am concerned. Their projections have been even above target, in what they said they would do as far as production is concerned. They need some extra financing at this time.

The hon. member made a comparison with what we have done for Massey-Ferguson, Chrysler and White. I am very proud of what the government has done for those companies. But when he makes a comparison, let him be fair. We have actually given the money interest free to Co-operative Implements, which is significantly greater than just guaranteeing a loan; we are actually putting the money there. The provinces only have to do as much as we have done, and they will have no problems.

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HEALTH

REQUEST FOR VACCINATION PROGRAM TO COMBAT RED MEASLES

Mr. Stanley Hudecki (Hamilton West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. A disease which is seriously underrated by the public and also by some health workers, as far as morbidity is concerned, and one that can and does cause significant brain damage, is red measles. This serious virus infection is preventable by vaccination. The United States is committed to a national vaccination program, with a goal of completely eliminating the disease arising within that country by 1982. Does the Minister of National Health and Welfare have any plans to stimulate and co-ordinate such a program in Canada where the responsibility for health rests with the provinces?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, the jurisdiction for implementing such health policy remains with the provincial health authorities. However, the fact is that the National Advisory Committee on Immunization which prepared guidelines for the eradication of measles in Canada strongly recommended that legislation be enacted in each of the ten provinces requiring measles immunization prior to school entry. Unfortunately it has not been implemented in some parts of Canada. I do not have the direct power to do it, so I guess an occasion such as this to tell the public is of value.

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THE CONSTITUTION

RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. He will recall that a couple of days ago I asked him how many provinces have not yet given their consent to withdrawing the

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override provision to the equality clause, Section 28. Following question period the Prime Minister will recall that he intimated informally to me across the floor of the House of Commons that there were two such provinces. Then he intimated that, if that number were reduced to one, he might consider reinstating the clause as it was in the original, but that he could not do so if it were two or more provinces.

Seeing that there seems to be only one province now which is withholding its approval, I ask the Prime Minister: most sincerely whether he would, in concert with eight provinces, agree to reinstate Section 28 to give full equality to male and female persons as it was in the original resolution?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. lady should have terminated her question by saying, "as it was in the original resolution, which the Tories did not support".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Not true.

Mr. Crombie: Be serious.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. There is very little time remaining in question period, and we would like to hear from a lot of questioners.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. lady is asking me a hypothetical question because I do not know how many provinces will in the end support the amendments to restore the charter to its original form, the way it had been proposed. I do not know how many provinces, in the end, will support: maybe all, maybe not all.

I would say the same thing about aboriginal rights. Maybe all will support the restoration of aboriginal rights, and maybe they will not. However, the question remains hypothetical in the sense that I cannot say in advance what the courts would have defined as a consensus of the provinces. We know that too did not appear to be enough. We know that ten is not necessary. I do not know how many provinces we would need to go to London in order that we would have established the constitutionality in a conventional sense of the demarche. I suppose that could only be settled by the courts.

• (1150)

If the question does arise, we will have to make up our minds on this side of the House if "x" number of provinces is enough or not. I hope we will not have to ask ourselves that question because I am sure the house will let any changes to the accord made on Thursday, two weeks ago, be made with the consent of the provinces. I think that is important.

I fail to understand what the laughter is about on that side of the House. Maybe I could have a supplementary question and try to deal with the question.

QUERY RESPECTING NUMBER OF NON-CONSENTING PROVINCES

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a supplementary question. The Prime Minister will remember, of course, that Section 28 was not in the proposals brought before the House a year ago this October, and presented by the Prime Minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: That section was added in April of this year with the consent and agreement of all parties of this House, because I think we all want to see that section carried out. Therefore, I really want to come back to the question that I posed to the Prime Minister and the information that I understood he conveyed to me the other day that, while two provinces would present some difficulty for him in undertaking to make any change to the clause as it now stands before the House, if that number were reduced to one he might consider it. I am asking him will he now consider that?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member makes a point that Section 28 was not in the charter when it was first introduced. She is right, of course, and she is right that many other changes in the charter were made following the introduction into this House in October of last year. She should be reminded of the process which caused that to happen.

We had a pretty good charter in the month of June, 1980. The Minister of Justice attempted to get provinces on side. I now think the House realizes how hard that is on some aspects of the charter and aboriginal rights.

The Minister of Justice, in an attempt to get the provinces on side, watered down that charter in many aspects in the hope of getting a consensus in September of 1980.

We did not get the consensus. Therefore we decided to act with just the authority of Parliament. Since Parliament was going to act on its own, at least in so far as our party and most of the New Democratic Party was concerned, we could afford to improve the charter.

I remind the hon. member of what position she and her party took at that time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Hon. members do not like to be reminded of that, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Siddon: Answer the question!

An hon. Member: You did the Canadian thing!

Mr. Trudeau: It was that we patriate the Constitution with an amending formula, and that then, after, we would write a charter in Canada.

Mr. Siddon: Let's do that after, then!

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Mr. Trudeau: We are going to patriate with an amending formula, and we are going to have a pretty good charter. But let us do what that party has urged all along. Let us, when the Constitution comes back, write a charter in Canada, and then we will get into the job together and do the parts that are not completed.

Mr. Siddon: Let's do that!

Mr. Trudeau: Surely that was the position for the whole of last year, that we should write the charter in Canada. How can they now say, "Write it in this House of Commons, even if the provinces do not want to do this?" They have been saying the contrary to that for a year.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: You changed your position. That's not what you said the other day.

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FINANCE

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE AND REGRESSIVE TAXES

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance a question. Could he give us some clear indication of what he and his cabinet consider to be the difference between a progressive tax and a regressive tax?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think the existence of a progressive tax is obvious to everyone in the House. What I have been attempting to do is to ensure that there be some relationship between the size of a person's income and the tax burden which that person bears. What I found rather difficult to justify was that, because of the tax system, certain tax filers could entirely escape paying tax. I do not regard that to be a progressive tax system.

QUERY RESPECTING SYSTEM

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear that that is what the finance minister feels. Social scientists in Canada judged the Clark government budget to be the most progressive in the decade of the seventies.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hawkes: On the national accounts basis, page 73 of his supplementary document, it becomes clear to Canadians that indirect hidden taxes have doubled under his stewardship from \$100 per family to over \$200 per family per month, amounting to \$2,500 a year in hidden taxes. Poor people, middle-income people and rich people pay the same. Is that progress, or is that the king of regression who sits in that chair across the House?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, obviously the social scientists were out of touch with Parliament—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen:—and out of touch with the Canadian people. Maybe that should give all of us something to think about—

Mr. Huntington: Let's have another election.

Mr. MacEachen:—when we begin to quote social scientists. I presume that the hon. member is an advocate of a progressive tax system, from listening to his questions. Perhaps he ought to have a conversation with one of his colleagues in that party who, earlier in the question period, condemned me and the government for making some changes to the deductibility of interest expenses. Would he believe, the way the deductibility of interest expenses has been applied in the tax system—

Mr. Huntington: Still don't understand it, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen:—has been to permit high income earners in this country to reduce their tax to zero.

Mr. Siddon: That's nonsense. Why do you tax them on money they didn't get?

Mr. MacEachen: Therefore, I ask the hon. member whether it is a progressive and fair tax system when very high income individuals can pay no taxes whatsoever, maybe for an indefinite period of time. That is what I have been attempting to remove from the tax system.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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COMMUNICATIONS

REVIEW OF BROADCASTING POLICY

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications, who knows that a recent Federal Communications Commission decision in the United States liberalized trans-border satellite signal delivery, and that that decision may have far reaching effects for both the Canadian TV viewers and also for Canadian business interests. The 1972 U.S.-Canada agreement, which prohibited the reception of foreign satellite signals, as the minister knows discriminated against people living in certain regions of the country where foreign American signals were not available, either off air or through microwaves by cable.

I want to know when the minister intends to announce a new broadcast policy, a global one in terms of its regulation system which will treat TV content requirements equally, regardless of what carriage options communities in northern and remote areas of Canada choose to employ.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!