

*Oral Questions***FINANCE****VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—TOTAL GOVERNMENT
BORROWING TO IMPROVE EXCHANGE RATE**

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As the minister continues to seed uncertainty in the marketplace with his inadequate statements and lack of decisive action on many financial matters, will he, in view of the still falling 89-cent Canadian dollar, clarify for the House and the Canadian public his statement of last evening—made outside this House—that it was the intention of the administration to take down \$200 million of their \$1.5 billion line of credit, but that it was only one sequence in a group of borrowings planned by the administration? What do they plan to borrow in total, and for how long?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, after careful consideration, I made a statement yesterday. We decided to borrow \$200 million yesterday. The stand-by credit is there. The governor of the Bank of Canada will be borrowing more when it is judged necessary.

Mr. Stevens: As business confidence continues to fall day by day, as shown by the Bank of Montreal's recent poll, due largely to the administration's inept handling of so many economic matters, will the minister at least clarify his borrowing intentions with regard to our balance of payments deficit? He indicated one week ago that he plans to borrow foreign funds to help cover the balance of payments deficit. What is the magnitude of that borrowing? To what degree will he cover that deficit, which is now estimated to be almost \$6 billion?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, there is another flow of capital coming into Canada outside of the planned borrowing by the federal government. We are in negotiation at this time. When agreement is reached, I will make it public.

● (1442)

Mr. Stevens: Another question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the extreme uncertainty which prevails in the country today, would the minister agree to make a statement on motions concerning the present position of our foreign exchange, or would he make a suitable reference to the appropriate committee so there could be clarification of the government's handling of our foreign exchange at the present time?

Mr. Chrétien: In two days the Bank of Canada will be publishing its monthly report on the figures.

Mr. Stevens: We know that.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

FISHERIES**REQUEST FOR CLOSING OF RIVER SYSTEMS CONTAMINATED BY
MERCURY**

Mr. B. Keith Penner (Thunder Bay): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Fisheries. In view of reports that the Minister of National Health and Welfare intends to recommend the closing of the English-Wabigoon River system unilateral action on the part of the federal government because of mercury contamination, would the hon. gentleman give serious consideration to following an entirely consistent policy which would involve the closing of all river systems in Canada where mercury levels in fish life exceed the tolerable limit?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): I am informed that the Minister of National Health and Welfare was incompletely reported. In fact, it is to the provincial department of fisheries that she will address her request for closure. This is perfectly normal, since the Ontario fishery is a provincial responsibility. To this extent, I am in the hands of the minister responsible for fisheries in Ontario since the federal government does not have the policing capacity to put such a ban into effect.

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ENERGY**JUSTIFICATION OF MONEYS PAID UNDER EISENBERG
CONTRACT**

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Since renegotiation of the Eisenberg contract was specifically discussed and agreed to by him, would he now assure the House that the expenditure of a considerable amount of public funds with respect to that contract is fully justified, or whether any further investigation has been carried out to determine whether fair and reasonable use is being made of funds supplied to this agent?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): The hon. member will appreciate that the report of the public accounts committee dealing with this matter was tabled only yesterday and I have not yet had an opportunity to familiarize myself with all its recommendations. However, my first impression is that action on most of the recommendations, if not all of them, is substantially advanced.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I would have thought that for some months now the minister would have been actively pursuing the question whether or not there had been massive abuse of public funds with respect to this agency. Is he telling us that no action has been taken by his own department?

Mr. Gillespie: The hon. member did not listen to the answer I gave to his last question. I made it clear that as I read through the recommendations in the committee report made yesterday, I was very pleased to note that nearly all those