

*Business of the House***THE ECONOMY**

EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR—INTEREST RATE LEVELS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday in Windsor the Commissioner of Development indicated that several auto parts firms are seriously considering moving to the United States because of the appreciation of the value of the Canadian dollar, presaging the kind of thing that can happen particularly under free trade arrangements.

When will the Minister of Finance take action to do something about the interests rates which are elevating the value of the dollar, disadvantaging Canadian manufacturers in continuing their operations in Canada, and encouraging them to move to the United States at the cost of Canadian jobs?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that if the Hon. Member would look at the level of interest rates today relative to the United States and compare that interest rate spread to any time during the past eight or nine years, he will find that that is not out of line. My understanding is that the average for that period was about 1.40 per cent. The spread now is between 1.50 per cent and 1.60 per cent for the last number of months. We are in the same sort of ballpark as we have been.

I think that if people are looking at moving out of the country, there are other reasons. I would also caution the Hon. Member that, in the discussions that I have had with a number of manufacturers, they feel that they can be quite competitive at this level of the Canadian dollar because there are number of other considerations in the competitive position besides simply the level of the Canadian dollar.

Mr. McCurdy: Why should they have to?

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the House Leader for a statement of the business he intends to call for the coming week.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the Order Paper as of today has outlined, we will again be proceeding this afternoon with Bill C-129, the Air Canada Act, followed by Bill C-121, the reorganization and divestiture of Eldorado Nuclear and certain Acts in consequence thereof; followed by Bill C-110, third reading of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal; followed by Bill C-103, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; followed by Bill C-126, consideration of report stage of the Bretton Woods Bill; followed by Bill C-82, the lobbyists Bill; followed by Bill C-30, report stage of the

National Parks Act and Bill C-73, an Act to provide for the implementation of an agreement respecting Indian lands in Ontario.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I note the Government said nothing about whether it intends to deal with the question of abortion either through the motion it has on the Order Paper or otherwise. I ask this not in any confrontational way but to seek clarification in terms of the operation of the House and because of the great interest in the how the Government will deal with this subject on the part of the public.

As the Government House Leader will recall, the Deputy Government House Leader said last week when I asked this question that he intended to call the Government's motion on abortion on Monday with a view to enabling any procedural issues to be argued and ruled on by the Speaker. Then it was well known and understood that the Government would call a motion for formal debate, if I am not mistaken Thursday of this week, today. Then on Monday morning I, and I presume my NDP counterpart, received a telephone message hours before the House was to open saying that the Government was not going to call the motion. The Deputy Government House Leader later said to the press and to myself that, in effect, the matter was going back to the government caucus.

I go through this because I want to provide an explanation as to why I am asking the question and also to make clear that contrary to what was said by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) in Question Period, there was no obstruction on the part of the Official Opposition preventing the Government from calling this matter for debate or bringing this matter for debate. In fact, we do not have the authority or ability to obstruct even if we wanted to because the Government controls absolutely the use of government time and designates what measures will be discussed.

I repeat, I am not raising this in a confrontational way. I think, however, that I should try to clear the air on this subject so as to give the Government a chance to clear the air because of the perplexity on the part of many people over what has happened on this subject this week as well as the interest of the public at large in having some clarification.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Clearly it had been our intention, and it still is our intention, to bring forth the resolution to have the abortion issue debated. One of the reasons there was reluctance to proceed was that clearly both opposition Parties served notice that they would fight this issue on procedural grounds. That is a fact because in a preliminary way they clearly served notice that this would be fought on procedural grounds.

● (1510)

Having regard to that fact, the Deputy Government House Leader is in the process of organizing a meeting with House