

Oral Questions

government's plan to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and some experts have estimated that the cost of this loss in opportunity to bid will reach \$5 billion worth of contracts to Arab states.

Based on the studies which have been done by his department, can the minister comment on whether this potential trade loss is accurate?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, there have been studies done on the effect of the announcements in June of the possible movement of the embassy to Jerusalem. I cannot confirm right now the precise figure that the hon. member mentions. There is clearly a hiatus resulting in trade negotiations on contracts with those countries. We are concerned about it, we are following it closely, and we hope that the whole matter will be clarified shortly as a result of the trip made by the Hon. Robert Stanfield.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the minister of state would table the studies which have been done by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. At the same time, will he table the programs that he intends to cut out as announced by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce yesterday?

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, the studies that have been carried out are, essentially, an ongoing review of the discussions that have been held between the department and interested companies who are doing business in that part of the world. I do not propose to make those public because they are confidential discussions between companies and officials in my department.

● (1430)

As far as the second part of the hon. member's question is concerned, I have said that I propose to have something to announce in relation to a trade policy and trade promotion activities.

* * *

FINANCE

VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Arthur Phillips (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Finance. Over the past year or so, the President of the Treasury Board and other ministers, including the Prime Minister, have made many statements to the effect that if elected they would take steps to raise the value of the Canadian dollar to approximately 90 cents U.S.

In view of the terribly pessimistic forecasts by the Minister of State for International Trade for a deterioration of our trade balance in 1980—and, indeed, 1981—is this still the government's policy?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks if this is still the govern-

[Mr. Foster.]

ment's policy. I would like to correct him. It was never the government's policy.

In direct answer to the hon. member's question, I would say that the desirability of a stable dollar in relation to the American dollar is certainly something that all in this House surely seek. A higher dollar would be something that any government in power would like to achieve. As has been indicated time and again in the House, we are in a situation where, as the Secretary of State for International Trade indicated, the aftermath of the previous government's handling of our export position is something that will take some time to turn around. But I can assure the hon. member that it is being done.

Mr. Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I was really talking about the next two years, rather than looking at the past and reliving previous elections.

Since the trade minister forecast that the negative balance of payments would go from about \$5 billion to \$10 billion, we are looking ahead. What does the Acting Minister of Finance believe would be an appropriate level for the Canadian dollar in terms of the U.S. dollar?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that such a hypothetical question cannot be answered in this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

STEPS TO SUPPORT CANADIAN EXPORTERS

Mr. Ray Chenier (Timmins-Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for International Trade, whose job is to support exporters in many ways such as by keeping political, external relationship harmonious and productive.

[*Translation*]

I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, what the minister's itinerary will be for the weeks to come, and if it will include the Middle East.

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I have no immediate plans to take any trips in the next few weeks. My intention is to be very active in support of Canadian exporters in other countries of the world and to support their business activities.