

Oral Questions

Again today *The Globe and Mail* in a featured article said this about the role of the provinces: "One of the most disruptive features of the past few years has been the damage done to the private sector by provincial governments and their agencies which borrowed record amounts of money abroad. They helped push the Canadian dollar into unsustainable levels and destroyed many jobs".

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, Ontarians have an incompetent government at Queen's Park and a do-nothing government in Ottawa. What do they expect Ontarians to do?

Ontario has historically been a leading spark plug for the Canadian economic engine and it is being allowed to wither away irresponsibly. While the government may be prepared to write off Ontario politically, when will it be responsible to the nation's economic best interest and seriously attempt to stimulate the Ontario economic sector?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we are trying desperately to offset the disruptive, destructive policies of the Ontario government. It goes beyond this NDP government because its spending goes to the root of the debt problem. The foreign debt problem that I was talking about rose by 10.5 per cent per year between 1984 and 1992 while the federal government's expenditures rose at the rate of 4 per cent per year.

That is what has been driving up our international debt. That is what has been putting pressure on interest rates and that is what has been putting pressure on the dollar. The hon. member should know that. We have taken steps to stimulate the manufacturing and processing sector. We are reducing taxes, not raising taxes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will try to get a few more questions in.

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SOMALIA

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The UN Security Council has approved a U.S. led enforcement action to Somalia to guarantee delivery of aid to hundreds of thousands of Somalians, victims of starvation and armed gangsters.

We welcome the fact that humanitarian needs are seen to merit such action. Canada has been asked to participate in this operation and Canadians want to know what is the government's recommendation to Parliament.

Will the government guarantee an emergency parliamentary debate to discuss the nature of Canada's involvement before any final decision is made by the government?

• (1200)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, there is no question that the resolution that was passed yesterday in the Security Council is a serious one. We have been approached to participate and I will be making an announcement on that shortly.

It is, of course, an announcement that will reflect a decision by the government. I understand that House leaders will be talking about a potential time for a discussion in Parliament as to the implications of that decision. The decision will be announced very shortly.

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ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, last year the Auditor General reported that much of Canada's aboriginal housing is overcrowded and unsuitable. We know these conditions lead to serious health and social problems, diseases, domestic violence, sexual abuse, alcoholism and suicide problems, which the government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to address.

My question for the Minister of Finance is this: Why did he not in his financial statement invest in upgrading aboriginal housing when he knows that housing construction is the most labour-intensive investment of public money that can be made? It would create jobs in aboriginal communities where unemployment is extremely high. Further, the availability of decent housing would reduce the social problems that cause the tremen-