

S.O. 21

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): As a result of our sound administration, Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada prime rate is now down to 7.75 per cent.

Interest rates soared as high as 22.75 per cent under the Liberal administration. Through endless borrowings the Liberals created such a strong monetary demand that they pushed interest rates to unprecedented levels.

It is not as if the funds they siphoned off to the detriment of Canadian developers, businessmen and others anxious to build houses had been directed towards economic expansion. No, Sir, they used the money to bribe the electors and create such as hoc employment programs as "Canada Works".

The socialists are just as guilty. In their quest for power—like the Liberals—they did not hesitate to shift our national debt of more than \$250 billion onto the shoulders of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, we are putting Canada's economy back on an even keel. Interest rates are acceptable, mortgage payments are manageable, and developers are launching new businesses which create jobs: 600,000 of them.

Mr. Speaker, we have every intention of steering this course despite the efforts of the Opposition to belittle such concrete results.

* * *

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CLOSING OF CANADIAN EMBASSY IN HELSINKI

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the Government's recent decision to close the Canadian embassy in Helsinki, Finland, is a terrible blow to Finnish Canadians and a backward step for our country. It is especially unacceptable when it is being done to save money at a time when the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) spends millions of dollars for foreign junkets with huge entourages of his friends and cronies.

Sault Ste Marie has a large population of over 4,000 Finnish Canadians who have made a tremendous contribution to the city and to Canada. The Finnish Rest Home Association, for example, has built two excellent senior citizen housing facilities for 170 people. These Canadians are concerned about how consular services will be maintained for them with their families in Finland. Cultural ties between our two countries will be damaged by this move. Tourism will be hindered by this ill-conceived plan of the Government. Who will look after families who visit Finland in the future?

I call on the Government to rescind this order to close our Canadian embassy in Helsinki, Finland, which order is an insult to every Finnish Canadian.

* * *

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

AWARD OF CF-5 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT TO BRISTOL AEROSPACE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Selkirk—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, Wednesday was a great day for Manitoba. It was announced in Winnipeg that Bristol Aerospace was awarded a \$300 million contract to service a CF-5 fighter aircraft.

Speaking about the CF-5 contract, the company president of Bristol said:

It creates more business, it creates more jobs in the long haul.

More jobs and more business are important to every area of Canada. As the president of Bristol has stated, Manitoba will receive more jobs and more business as a result of the CF-5 contract. The president is confident that Bristol can win additional foreign contracts on CF-5 aircraft with the capabilities developed by his company under this contract. It is looking more and more that this contract could have a far greater benefit to Manitoba than the CF-18 contract which went to Canadair. Why all the fuss?

* * *

INDUSTRY

CLOSURE OF LUMBER MILL AT HAZELTON, B.C.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the workers and residents of the Hazelton area share my outrage about the enormous job loss proposed by Westar in closing the existing mill and opening a new mill at Carnaby this fall. According to federal government figures, the project will reduce direct mill jobs from 197 to 85. While the new mill will produce 200 million board feet to be sold to customers in Japan and the United Kingdom, thus avoiding the murderous 15 per cent Tory export tax, the hard-pressed Hazelton area will lose 112 vitally important mill jobs.

● (1115)

Since the federal Government is heavily involved in this project through a \$4.5 million interest-free loan, I call on the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and all cabinet Ministers to take the necessary steps along with Westar to put together a plan to keep those 112 mill workers working after the closure of the old mill and opening of the new Carnaby mill.

These families, 75 per cent of whom are native, have built their economic lives around the forest industry and have paid mightily to the federal treasury and the profits of Westar. Let