

Oral Questions

missiles and the Pershing IIs situated on their soil? At least they have the guts to say that they believe in nuclear suffocation, which is supposed to be the strategy of this government. So much for the Prime Minister's strategy of suffocation. That brings me to my supplementary, as to whether if, in fact, there will have to be future agreements for future testing of future weapons systems. Why can we not see in this Parliament the present agreement that has been drawn up—the minister has not denied it—to cover Cruise missile testing?

● (1450)

Therefore I ask the minister to give us no more of this other garbage which he has been giving us. Will he present and table in the House the agreement in principle that has been drawn up, and the specific agreement concerning Cruise missile testing? Will he return to the committee discussing our preparation for the UN special session on disarmament and explain to the Canadian public, through that committee, why the government of this country is abrogating the spirit, if not the letter, of its strategy of nuclear suffocation?

Mr. Crosbie: Yes or no.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, as I previously explained to the hon. member, the agreement is in the process of negotiation. When the agreement is completed I will certainly consider making it available to the House. I see no reason why it should be kept a secret.

Miss Jewett: You have been keeping it secret for two years.

Mr. MacGuigan: I can assure the hon. member that I will be before the parliamentary committee again in the ordinary course and I will certainly be pleased to answer questions on the subject.

I am sorry that she has such a misunderstanding of the policy of suffocation. This is a policy of mutual restraint. It is not a policy of unilateral disarmament which I am sure would please the hon. member. While the hon. member may advocate the policies of unilateral disarmament, that is not the policy of the government. The government policy is one of mutual restraint. In fact we believe that the maintenance of our deterrent is in itself the best bargaining counter that we can have in the negotiations for arms limitations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

CRITERIA FOR LOANS

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As the minister is, I am sure, painfully aware, the number of bankruptcies and receiverships, and the number of Canadians who are just closing their doors on their businesses reached unprecedented heights in February, thus contributing to massive unemployment. At

the same time the Federal Business Development Bank for the last year has imposed criteria which are much more severe than even the criteria imposed by the chartered banks. As a vivid illustration of this, during the last nine months of 1981 in Cambridge, with a population of 75,000, there has been one loan for \$30,000. Does the bank have any useful function any longer, or is this just another illustration of this government turning the screws on the small business community when times get tough?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I feel that the hon. member could have asked his question in an entirely different forum, but I should be very happy to look into the situation in Cambridge personally with the authorities of the Federal Business Development Bank. However, his conclusion that the Federal Business Development Bank is an institution whose trade practices are more restrictive than those of the chartered banks is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. When we know—and the House does know since these figures are public—that last year, the Federal Business Development Bank lost \$41 million and that prospects are more or less the same for the current year, it is clear that the bank is losing money on its loans, Madam Speaker, and is doing so at a rate of 2.6 per cent, compared with 1.2 per cent for chartered banks. The Federal Business Development Bank is therefore not only useful to businesses as a lender of last resort, but it is also helping the economy, since more than \$500 million worth of loans are being made by this institution to Canada's small businesses.

[*English*]

REQUEST THAT CRITERIA BE RELAXED

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, just as the Liberal government has cut the guts out of the small business development aspect of the bond, it has cut the guts out of the development aspect of the bank.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speyer: For my supplementary question to the Minister of Finance, I plead with the minister in these times when we have punishing interest rates, a deepening recession, and 1.2 million people unemployed, to loosen the restrictive criteria of the Federal Business Development Bank so that more small businessmen and women in this country can obtain loans.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I do not think that the criteria governing the practices of the Federal Business Development Bank were instigated by the government. Legislation was passed by this House in 1976, and indeed the terms of reference within which the Federal Business Development Bank must operate do not give it much leeway, because under