

Oral Questions

for Canadians to assess very carefully the options that they have for the future, including questions such as whether we should have freer trade between us and the United States, a North American common market, or a policy of more Canadian independence and more Canadian control over Canadian industry.

I have indicated that these are matters which should be seriously studied and on which the public should be informed so that they can make a conscious decision in the next few years as to our economic future. What I favour is a complete study, a weighing of the costs and benefits and a conscious decision by the Canadian people as to what direction we should take.

*[Translation]*INQUIRY WHETHER HOUSE COMMITTEE WILL STUDY
ADVANTAGES OF PROPOSAL

Mr. Bernard Loiselle (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. If the minister is so interested, can he tell us if he has formed a committee to consider the pros and cons of that matter and, if so, when can the House expect to receive its recommendations?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what I am in favour of is not proceeding blindly down a path which leads to we know not where, as the last administration did. I am in favour of adopting a course consciously. No committee has yet been appointed, but I have asked the officials of my department to have a preliminary look at these questions and to prepare the data.

I agree with the Senate committee which studied this issue, and the Economic Council of Canada, that these are matters which should be seriously looked at before we decide what is the most reasonable way to determine our future on these matters.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

CONSIDERATION OF INCREASED EXPORTS OF GAS TO U.S. IN
RETURN FOR MARKETS FOR MANUFACTURED GOODS

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Five weeks ago, in answer to questions in this House, the Prime Minister stated that the effect of the Buy American act on Canadian exports of urban transportation equipment was a very serious concern to the government, and that the matter was on the agenda for discussion with President Carter.

The Minister of State for International Trade stated in the House the next day that he had discussed the matter that very morning with the U.S. ambassador. Last Thursday morning the *Gazette* reported that Bombardier may have to move its 800-employee transit vehicle manufacturing operation to the

[Mr. Crosbie.]

United States because of that act. Last Thursday evening, the government announced increased gas exports to the United States.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Would the hon. member put his question.

Mr. Berger: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As I said, last Thursday evening the government announced increased gas exports to the United States.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Berger: Was any consideration given by the government to tying one to the other, that is, to provide increased gas exports to the U.S. if they provide us with markets for our manufactured goods?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right, that the possible move of Bombardier to the United States is a very real concern of this government. It is a matter on which I had discussion in Washington last Thursday. To specifically answer the question on whether consideration has been given to tying the two matters together, the answer is no.

Mr. Berger: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of State for International Trade. After the minister's discussions with the United States, would he now give an indication as to our chances of obtaining amendments to that act?

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I think that there is a very good chance that we will be able to settle this matter on a satisfactory basis for the urban transportation industry. Our ambassador in Washington has had discussions with the new administration for the department of transportation in the United States. He advised me last week that there is a good opportunity for a satisfactory agreement. At this stage, I do not have any details which I can put before the House, but as soon as I have something I will do so.

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FINANCE

HIGH INTEREST RATES AND GOVERNMENT CUTBACKS—
DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON CULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the urbane, refined and cultured Minister of Finance.

Mr. Knowles: He isn't here.

An hon. Member: Did they change ministers?

Mr. Rose: According to press reports, a number of labour-intensive Canadian cultural enterprises, including the Stratford Festival, smaller theatre companies and the Canadian book publishing industry, are reeling under government cut-