

Oral Questions

by Chrysler, which are still very much a matter of discussion and negotiation, have changed a number of times since the matter was first raised with the government. I do not think it is definite that the benefits and the corresponding cost to the taxpayer are necessarily as optimistic from the point of view of workers and communities as he suggests. To give an example that he does not know what he is talking about, the plant in question is not in my riding. It is in a riding represented by one of my colleagues. When it comes to working for the working people in the Windsor area, I will be happy to stake my achievements against the non-achievements of my hon. friend and his colleagues any day.

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THE ECONOMY

FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROLS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. He will know that two hours ago the Canadian dollar was trading at its lowest point in history against the U.S. dollar. The minister will also know that on Tuesday of last week the Prime Minister was asked four questions by the hon. member for Yukon, the last one of which asked the Prime Minister to confirm that it was not the intention of his government to impose foreign exchange controls. The Prime Minister refused to respond in the fashion that everyone in this House would have expected him to respond, by suggesting that it was a matter of cabinet solidarity which precluded him—

Madam Speaker: Order. Does the hon. member feel he has to repeat all questions that have been asked in this House? He should ask his own question. That is why he was recognized.

Mr. Gamble: Having regard to the condition of the dollar today, will the Acting Prime Minister deny that the government has any intention of imposing foreign exchange controls?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, this has been done many times. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have denied it. My hon. friend will have an opportunity this afternoon to take part in the debate. If he wants to raise the question after the Minister of Finance has completed his oration, I am quite sure the Speaker will permit him to do so.

REQUEST THAT SPECIAL COMMITTEE EXAMINE ESTIMATES

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has frequently asked the members of this House to offer positive suggestions with respect to how this country may be assisted in its economic plight. Will the Acting Prime Minister accept the suggestion made last week that this House establish a special standing committee for the purpose of examining the estimates with a view to reducing those that can be reduced in order to pare the cost of government?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I look forward to the debate this afternoon because, presumably, we will hear from the Leader of the Opposition. In the last week or so we have heard from a number of members on the other side. For example, the hon. member who asked the question asked for a reduction in Canada's foreign aid. Others have asked for a 10 per cent cut in government expenditures. Others have asked for an increase in the money provided for housing, others asking for an increase in the money provided to home owners, and so on. We have had a real hodge-podge of suggestions.

This afternoon will be a great day for the opposition. They will have an opportunity to reconcile their views and come out with a co-ordinated stand. We on this side of the House have done so. The Minister of Finance is now building on the consensus that we developed among ourselves. Hopefully the opposition will do the same thing. It will be useful to the country if we can take a generous, widely-based position on what needs to be done at this time.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

URANIUM PRICE-FIXING TRIAL—CONTENTS OF BERTRAND INQUIRY REPORT

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. As the minister is aware, about ten days ago the Court of Appeal of Ontario confirmed a superior court judgment with respect to the uranium cartel and said that Uranium Canada and Eldorado Nuclear were immune from prosecution. What method does the minister, who is in charge of these Crown corporations, propose to allow the people of Canada and the members of this House to know the results of the Bertrand inquiry as they pertain to those two Crown corporations?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the matter has been before the court. It is still subject to being further appealed, if the parties so desire. Therefore, I would not want to comment. My only comment is that I will let the law follow its course.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, in this case the minister and the government are guilty of the most massive cover-up ever in this House. I say to the minister, as his own counsel said, that he had the directing mind and will of Uranium Canada, and completely controlled and determined the acts of that corporation. In light of what the Court of Appeal said in an unreserved judgment from the bench, will the minister tell us how the Canadian people are to understand what the Bertrand inquiry put forth? What method does the minister propose to allow the Canadian people and members of this House to know that?