

Oral Questions

have been saying that interest rates are too high and have a very negative impact on the economy, on investments and on jobs. When will the Minister start listening to the provinces and other Canadian institutions to change these misguided policies? When?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member wrote down that question before he heard my answer to his second question.

Mr. Allmand: I know what the provinces have said.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I just told the Hon. Member what the provinces have said. I don't think he was listening very carefully. Let us get to the point. The point is that the Hon. Member wants to get interest rates down. We also want to get interest rates down.

Mr. Allmand: And jobs.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Hon. Member wants to have jobs. We are creating jobs in this country at a very satisfactory rate. I want to say to the Hon. Member that you cannot just snap your fingers and say, interest rates go down. They go down through the operations of the market-place. The Hon. Member is suggesting that we ignore the market-place, get interest rates down in an unnatural way. He knows full well that that will lead us right back to the policies of the Government that he was a part of in the 1970s and the early 1980s that led to the high inflation, high interest rates of 25 per cent back in 1981-82, and the huge unemployment disaster which we had at that time. This Government is going to avoid that.

Mr. Allmand: Wrong Budget, Mike.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

ACID RAIN EMISSION CONTROLS

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Canadians are concerned that the Prime Minister was unable to secure from President Bush a solid commitment to negotiate an acid rain accord. Although the President confirmed his administration would introduce domestic legislation to cut sulphur dioxide emissions, Canadians did not get any specific details on the nature of the legislation. Why is the Prime Minister once again coming back empty

handed? Why has he not been able to secure a firm commitment from the President on acid rain control?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's genuine interest in arriving finally at an accord which will bring some control to acid rain emissions on both sides of the 49th parallel. In fact, we have made some very considerable progress, as the Hon. Member will know. There is a proposal coming before the United States Congress by late May or early June that will provide the U.S. legislators with authority in their own jurisdiction to proceed with actions similar to those already taken in Canada. That will provide the basis for an accord between the two countries. The necessity of that accord is agreed to by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada. The negotiations on that accord will begin shortly after the matter is through the U.S. Congress.

This is very substantial progress, and brings an end to a period when Canadians have been seeking, without much response from the United States, some common action against acid rain. We are making significant progress. I know the Hon. Member will join me and other members in the House in celebrating that.

AWARD PRESENTED TO PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again for the Acting Prime Minister. The Prime Minister while in Washington accepted an award from a group whose chairman is the head of the USX Corporation, a company which does not believe acid rain is a problem that needs further controls. A position paper of the company says, and I quote:

The case for acid rain control remains unproved.

Does the Acting Prime Minister agree that in accepting this award the Prime Minister has damaged Canadian credibility on the need for a Canada-U.S. acid rain accord? Has the Prime Minister not implicitly accepted the views of the U.S. company which has been described as one of the country's worst polluters?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Of course not, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a rather lamentable practice for the House for Members on the opposite side, for simply partisan reasons, to attack an honour that comes not only to the Prime Minister of Canada, but to the whole of Canada—

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): From that company? Come on.