

Canadian Economy

Mr. Stevens: That is the thrust of our motion. Again, if the hon. member for Willowdale would stop talking but read this Economic Review—

Mr. Nielsen: He is shooting from the lip.

Mr. Stevens: —he would find on page 8 the interest rate structure is given for the large OECD countries. Large, means the seven largest countries in the OECD. On page 8 we find, not as the government has been representing, that it is simply playing catch-up as far as interest rates are concerned, but that we are at the top of the list with the highest interest rates in the world. That review indicates that in December the central bank discount rate in Canada was 17.26 per cent. The next highest was Italy's central bank discount rate at 16.5 per cent. The lowest central bank discount rate, of course, was that of Japan at 7.25 per cent.

Mr. Peterson: If you read those figures, you will also find that we were one of the countries that increased employment last year.

Mr. Stevens: When the baboons are being affected you can always tell because the clamour gets louder and louder.

Mr. Huntington: You are getting to them.

Mr. Stevens: The hon. member from Willowdale asks about the amount of employment that was created last year. What he is not telling us is where that employment was created. Those jobs were created in the public service and related services.

Mr. Huntington: Not one of those jobs was productive.

Mr. Jarvis: Ask Herb Gray about Windsor. How many jobs were created in Windsor last year?

● (1220)

Mr. Stevens: Let me tell the hon. member for Willowdale that there is one job the government created for him of which he should be proud, and that is that he has a job as a member of this House. He would never get such a good job in any other place if he returned to the private sector.

Mr. Gray: Tell us about your job with the Bank of Western Canada.

Mr. Smith: Tell us about the bank rate.

Mr. Stevens: One of the backbenchers says "Tell us about the bank rate". That is what I am talking about. The fact is we were a world leader until the new socialist leader of France raised the French discount rate this morning to 22 per cent. Here we have the vice-president of "Socialist International" in this country, the leader of the New Democratic Party, egging the government on to more and more spending. Until this morning we have had the highest interest rates as a result of that spending, which creates inflation. We may well have an increasing interest rate structure in Canada that will return us

to the number one or worst spot if the socialistic and spending tendencies of the present government are maintained.

Mr. Jarvis: Now they are number two they will try to go higher.

Mr. Stevens: I am not quoting our figures or figures from PC research; I am quoting the government's own statistics. That is what they find so embarrassing.

Let us turn to real growth. On page 1 of his Economic Review, the Minister of Finance reveals, stands naked if you like, for all those who wish to read it, that our real growth in 1980 was 0.1 per cent, just marginal. If you relate that to workers, you find that the average worker in this country had a decline in real growth last year, in fact for the last four years. Under this government, every worker has had steadily declining real growth in wages.

Mr. Peterson: Tell us what happened in the seven major OECD countries.

Mr. Stevens: The hon. member is making it for me here. We should keep this up, Willowdale and York-Peel. He asks about the seven major OECD countries.

Mr. Peterson: Canada's decline in growth was less than any of the other OECD countries.

Mr. Stevens: If the hon. member will look at page 1, he will see that the minister has averaged it out for him. The average for the major OECD countries was 1.3 per cent real growth compared to our 0.1 per cent.

Mr. Peterson: The average over the last two years has been better than any of the other OECD countries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for Willowdale will have an opportunity to speak later today. The hon. member for York-Peel has the floor.

Mr. Stevens: At the risk of having the hon. member for Willowdale completely succumb to the statistics, let me refer him to page 6 of his minister's Economic Review. This is where we find the shattering effect of our discounted dollar. There it is revealed that the real effective exchange rate in Canada is now the lowest of all the countries listed on page 6. Our real exchange rate in an effective sense is now below 90, 89.8, compared to other countries such as Norway, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Australia, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan and the United States, which have all done better.

Mr. Jarvis: Is Gabon in there?

Mr. Stevens: If the Minister of Finance stays there too long, they will be running hard to overtake us as far as their Gabonese currency is concerned. Canada's economic decline over the past decade is reflected not only in the statistics I referred to, but in many other ways.