

Commerce made that recommendation, the government established a parliamentary inquiry into other policies to deal with high interest rates and the problem of inflation.

Will the Prime Minister of Canada follow the advice of his ministers and make a reference to a committee of Parliament with a mandate to look into other means to fight inflation than the means being followed now, means which are driving Canadians into bankruptcy, which are causing high-cost money, which are not effective in the fight against inflation?

[Translation]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, by saying that I am trying to blame others, including President Reagan, the Leader of the Opposition only shows once again that he has misunderstood the nature of my answers. If there is anyone to blame, it is certainly the Leader of the Opposition for failing to understand that the economies of all countries are interdependent. When I say, for example, that several European countries are experiencing the same problem as we are with regard to the American policy, the Leader of the Opposition prefers to change the subject. He knows, or at least he should know, that if we want to have economic policies entirely separate from those of the U.S., then we would have to resort to exchange control. That is not an option the government is prepared to entertain. Nor is it an option that the Leader of the Opposition has the courage to put forward as the sole consequence of the rather far-fetched theories he is advocating. Had he been in the House yesterday, he would have heard the speech in which I made it clear that we intend to submit these issues to the U.S., among others, during the economic summit that will be held here in Ottawa, because many industrialized countries are experiencing the same problem. It is not a question of blaming others, Madam Speaker, it is a question of taking our own responsibilities, while realizing that the policies of a country as important for Canada as the U.S. are not made in a vacuum and that they necessarily have an impact on us.

[English]

INVOLVEMENT OF PARLIAMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, will the Prime Minister of Canada empower a committee of Parliament to consider anti-inflation policies other than those recommended by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, anti-inflation policies which, in the hands of the government, are not working to fight inflation? They are only working to cause Canadians to be driven into bankruptcy and to pay much higher interest rates. Will he let Parliament do its work? Will he make such a reference to a committee?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, that is the final cop out that is well known on the part of the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: That party does not know what economic policy it wants to follow, whether it is the policy followed by the hon. member for St. John's West, the former minister of finance, who wants to cut spending, or the policy of higher spending advocated by so many others.

● (1425)

When they do not know what policy they want to follow, Madam Speaker—

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Trudeau: I am answering the question. I am advised to empower a committee of this Parliament to study the problem of inflation, just as this House was asked a few days ago to empower a committee to study capital punishment, because that party does not know what position it has on either of these questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister referred to courage. I think he should refer that comment to his current Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce who, a year and half ago, said he would resign if interest rates went any higher than 14 per cent. They are 20 per cent now so he should resign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member going to ask a question or make a speech?

* * *

ENERGY

POSSIBLE CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Many observers have attributed the current high interest rates to the low level of and weakness in the Canadian dollar, and have directly linked that weakness to the Liberal energy policy, the lack of confidence resulting from that, the outflow of money for exorbitant purchases of Belgium oil companies—

An hon. Member: Speech.

Mr. Wilson:—and the loss of capital to other countries.

Since governor Bouey stated that one of the reasons for the high interest policy he has been following is to protect the Canadian dollar, and because of the weakness caused by the energy program, can we expect any significant changes in the energy policy that would reduce this pressure on the Canadian dollar, improve the level of confidence in Canada and result in lower interest rates some time down the road?