

Oral Questions

tary of State for External Affairs said he would consider raising that matter with the Soviets and the Americans as part of the agenda at the Geneva arms talks. That has now been rejected. If the Government has rejected that approach to try to provide a ban on the deployment, what is the answer, and what is the position of the Government in relation to that major new threat in the whole area of arms escalation?

● (1420)

Hon. Robert C. Coates (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would think that the real answer to the Hon. Member's question is the reduction of nuclear armaments in the world. I believe that is what the Secretary of State of the United States, and the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. are going to be meeting about in January, and I believe that is what the Foreign Ministers at the NATO meeting are going to be discussing this week.

CANADIAN REPRESENTATIONS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with the Hon. Minister. However, if that is the case, why is the Government refusing or rejecting any representations to either of the superpowers in order to make that case, and to express on behalf of the Canadian people our concern about that threat and that we would like them to put the question of banning the deployment of Cruise missiles on the agenda for the Geneva talks? Why, Sir, is the Minister not making that representation on behalf of Parliament and of the Canadian people?

Hon. Robert C. Coates (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, we are making every representation possible for the reduction of nuclear armaments in the world. I would ask the Hon. Member if he would give the Secretary of State for External Affairs some support—

Mr. Axworthy: I did.

Mr. Coates:—rather than putting obstacles—

Mr. Axworthy: He rejected it.

Mr. Coates:—in the way of his achievements in that direction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

On his trip to the United States, why did the Minister discuss with Americans the changes the Government intends to make in the Foreign Investment Review Act?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure that I understand the thrust of the question put by the Hon. Member. We discussed in very general terms the whole question of foreign investment policy, industrial policy, and the approach we were going to be taking on deficit management. A wide range of things was discussed. I am not sure that I understand what the Hon. Member is driving at. However, the purpose of these meetings is to have a broad understanding of the policy direction between the two countries.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

INQUIRY WHETHER DETAIL OF CHANGES DISCUSSED

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, let me be a little clearer. We are talking here about major changes which have taken place, which were tabled in this House last Friday, with respect to foreign investments. Reports after that presentation indicated that the Minister had discussed—

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Langdon: Would the Minister please confirm that the details of some of those changes had been discussed with the American authorities on his visit to the United States before that Bill was tabled?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no to that question. I did not discuss the details. I discussed the general direction in which this Government is going regarding the whole policy on foreign investment, but not the details.

EFFECT OF CHANGES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Would the Minister tell us whether in the course of those general discussions he managed to receive any assurances from the United States that, in fact, such changes in law as you were talking about in Cabinet at that stage would lead to any new jobs or new investment here in this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has to understand that neither the Government of Canada nor the Government of the United States orders the private sector to invest or not invest. Those are decisions which are taken by the private sector in response to the general policy environment. What we are trying to do, and what the Americans encouraged us to do, is to improve the environment for private sector investment, because that is the way we can create permanent jobs. The only way we are going