

Oral Questions

of the House—as I am sure there will be—so that the Government of Canada could indicate its position on the four points in the resolution, and so that members on this side of the House could also indicate that all of us in the House can make it clear that we are behind the people of Poland 100 per cent in their serious struggle, without jeopardizing at all the international situation in other respects.

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I am truly sorry that the leader of the New Democratic Party is trying to indulge in petty politics on such an important matter. We on this side of the House have shown that we are serious about showing support for the Polish people. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has answered very extensively the concerns raised by the NDP leader. I indicated just now and did so quite clearly, that I am prepared to consider a request that is entirely new to us and to set aside tomorrow as an opposition day, for the purpose of discussing this kind of motion. I fail to see how the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party, could take offence at this show of generosity on our part.

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[English]

THE BUDGET

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance who once again is not in his seat, and with his budget, no wonder, I will address my question to the acting minister. In light of the Economic Council's advice to the government to take precisely the opposite tack to that being taken in the minister's budget, in order to reduce inflation and create jobs, will the government now agree to withdraw the budget and present the proposals in the form of a white paper before these recessionary measures can be implemented? Is it the aim of the government to destroy the economy simply to save face?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the hon. member's attitude and at the way she has allowed herself to be influenced by a report that was presented today. She could just as well have looked at the inflation figures and noticed that the inflation rate dropped from 13 per cent in July to 12.2 per cent in November, an indication that the government's firm resolve and determination, and the measure it is taking to reduce inflation, are effective. These measures are restated in the budget, and the government intends to see to it that inflation rates are brought down so as to make our economic climate more favourable.

[English]

PROVISIONS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. I am surprised at the way he would misinterpret a report prepared by an independent advisory body to his government. Possibly he can clear up another point which was raised by the missing Minister of Finance who claims that he is simply being misunderstood. Yesterday the Minister of Finance told the House that the only employee benefits named in his budget as being subject to taxation were transportation passes and board and lodging. He said, "no other subject was raised in the budget." Well, the budget papers specifically say, on page 20:

Among the benefits to become taxable are:

Employer contributions to private health service plans and dental plans on behalf of employees.

An hon. Member: Order.

Miss Carney: Would the real finance minister please stand up, either the one who feels these benefits are not taxable or the one who wrote the budget?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I wonder why the hon. member, who seems to have read the budget speech very carefully, is asking questions about the government's intentions. She has the budget, she has read it, and she certainly does not have to worry about intentions because the government's firm resolve as well as its intentions are stated in the budget. If she did not quite understand the budget, she should read it again and she will find the answers to her own questions.

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[English]

CARTELS

REQUEST THAT URANIUM CARTEL GAGGING ORDER BE WITHDRAWN

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. As the minister is aware, an order in council was recently passed partially lifting the gag order under the uranium information security regulations, on documents and information available to the public with respect to cartel activities on the part of a number of companies and individuals, including government Crown corporations. On the basis of the fact that all the litigation in the United States has now been completed and there is really no purpose served in terms of continuing this gag order, will the minister now agree to recommend to his cabinet colleagues the withdrawal of the entire regulation so that people in Canada will have the opportunity of a full investigation, and an opportunity of looking at the documents and information with respect to the cartel?