

—and this is the legacy we inherited in 1984—of inflation and deficit as a proportion of gross national product and all the other conditions that dictated a fairly severe monetary policy.

The result of our efforts has been that we now have the lowest inflation and the lowest interest rates. Among our major competitors, according to the IMF and other qualified international bodies, we will lead the world in 1992 and 1993 in terms of economic growth and job creation.

Senator Olson: Honourable senators, perhaps most Canadians believe that kind of little discourse that the minister just went through. That is why this government's strength in the Gallop polls has gone down to 16 or 18 per cent and even further, and why it is still going down. If you truly believe that the Canadian people are swallowing that kind of garbage, well, carry on and you will stay under 20 per cent.

Senator Frith: 82 per cent say they don't.

Senator Olson: That's right, they do not believe this.

THE CONSTITUTION

CHARLOTTETOWN ACCORD—AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL TEXTS FOR REFERENDUM

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. When can we expect to have the legal text, or whatever it will be termed, of the Charlottetown accord for the referendum on the 26th? I have here a headline which says:

La version juridique de l'accord de Charlottetown disponible le 5 octobre.

Since then, I understand that Mr. Clark has said it will not be available on October 5. When can we expect to have the actual legal version, or whatever it is termed?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have not had an opportunity to discuss this matter with Mr. Clark, but honourable senators will recall what I said on the matter on earlier occasions. The officials have been instructed to attack this task with all possible speed, but the work of drafting is infinitely complex. It involves all of the provincial, territorial and Aboriginal organizations that were parties to the discussions and the agreements.

• (1450)

I very much doubt that we will have complete and agreed-upon legal texts available within the next month. However, I hasten to add that every effort is being made to produce them as quickly as possible and, if possible, before the referendum.

Senator Molgat: What has happened in the interval? This same news story goes on to state:

[Translation]

The new deadline for the presentation of the official legal text of the Charlottetown Constitutional Agreement is now October 5, when the chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations will hold their general assembly.

[Senator Murray.]

Federal officials as well as provincial, territorial, and aboriginal representatives had already decided last Thursday to intensify their efforts in order to try to meet that deadline.

[English]

According to this article, all the representatives are there—provincial, territorial and Aboriginal. They agreed as of the Thursday before September 14 that they would meet that day. What has happened in the interval to change the circumstances?

Senator Murray: Nothing has happened, honourable senators. If those can be produced by October 5, that will be wonderful. However, my caution and my experience leads me to be sceptical of such an early deadline.

CENTRAL MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

DOWNPAYMENT REDUCTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS—USE OF RRSP FUNDS FOR DOWNPAYMENTS—STATUS OF PROGRAMS

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last February, CMHC allowed a reduction in the downpayment for first-time home buyers from 10 per cent to 5 per cent. There was also a provision to allow people to use their RRSP funds for downpayment purposes.

Will the honourable gentlemen ask his officials to provide some statistics concerning the program's success?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Yes, I will be glad to do so, honourable senators. I think my friend was referring to two discrete decisions. It is not one program, but two.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Senator Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government): I have answers to questions raised on September 9 by Senators Bonnell and Stewart regarding the P.E.I. fixed link; on September 9 by Senator Olson regarding the U.S. Export Enhancement Program; and on September 16 by Senator Molgat regarding a suggested tradeoff in Saskatchewan of telecommunications jurisdiction for constitutional support.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

FIXED LINK—STATUS OF PROJECT

(Response to question raised by Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell and Hon. John B. Stewart on September 9, 1992)

The Department of Public Works does not have a contract with Strait Crossing Incorporated to build the fixed link to P.E.I.

In July, the Minister of Public Works was authorized by Cabinet to enter into discussions with Strait Crossing Inc (S.C.I.). These discussions have focused around