

East Coast fishermen with the Chancellor of the West German Republic.

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SPACE WEAPONRY

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE—CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and also concerns the Summit. Following the Summit, President Mitterand of France announced that his Government, having considered the star wars project of President Reagan, came down on the negative side and decided not to participate. Did the Prime Minister use this occasion to discuss this project with President Reagan, and in the context of those discussions did he use the opportunity to tell President Reagan, one way or another, what the decision of the Government of Canada was?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the question of the Strategic Defence Initiative was naturally discussed informally among Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers. I indicated to Mr. Shultz there, as I have done indirectly through statements in this House and across Canada, that the Government of Canada was considering the invitation to participate in research and would announce that decision when our own inquiries and consultations had concluded, on our own timetable, in our own interests.

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL INQUIRY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): I take it, unless the Prime Minister corrects the Secretary of State for External Affairs, that a decision has not yet been reached.

My supplementary question is then directed to the Minister of Science and Technology. Could he tell the House if the National Research Council of Canada has been instructed in any way to participate in the star wars project?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is no.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER INVESTIGATE SITUATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Well then, my final question is directed to the Prime Minister, and I hope he will deal with it. I recently received a letter from a former senior scientist who worked for the Government of Canada, and he has informed me that just the opposite prevails. I have subsequently confirmed the authorship and contents of the letter with him on the telephone. He has said that the Government has not only made a decision to participate, but has done so in the context of assigning a leading role to the National Research Council. I would like to read a short part of the letter to the Prime Minister and ask him to respond. He writes:

Oral Questions

● (1430)

—the National Research Council has already been informed that Canada will participate in the American program of research for star wars, and that the National Research Council will act as the point of contact in Canada for co-operation between the two countries.

Mr. Mulroney: Who signed it?

Mr. Broadbent: I will be happy to provide the information to the Prime Minister. Given the seriousness of what this former distinguished scientist for the Government of Canada has said, will the Prime Minister undertake a personal investigation into this?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to undertake an investigation, provided the Member would identify who signed the letter. With deference to the individual, who is no doubt distinguished, the facts are completely at variance with the contents of that letter.

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BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

INTEREST RATES ISSUE

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Since high interest rates are the greatest obstacle to sustained non-inflationary growth, can the Prime Minister tell the House why the issue of interest rates was not prominent at the Bonn Summit, and why he did not join with other world leaders in pressing President Reagan to agree to a world monetary conference?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the question of interest rates was a very prominent one. It took up a considerable amount of time during the discussions among Finance Ministers.

With regard to the specific question about a world monetary conference, a report will be presented to Finance Ministers of the Group of Ten countries in Tokyo on June 21, I believe. Subsequent to that, there will be discussion of that report in different countries. It will be discussed further in Seoul at the IMF meetings. I imagine that there will be a decision taken at those meetings on how that matter will be dealt with further in the new year.

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, the communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Summit does not mention any joint undertaking to lower interest rates. Obviously any country that moves alone to lower its interest rates will see an exodus of capital in search of a higher return. It is presumably for this reason that in Washington last month the Minister of Finance stressed the importance of lowering real interest rates on a world-wide basis. Why was the consistency of this position not maintained in Bonn?