

Oral Questions

Courchene, a political supporter of his government, and take immediate steps to bring the dollar down?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I read the same article and Dr. Courchene said that Ontario has been the author of its own demise.

Speaking about the manufacturing sector, Courchene added: "Ontario spent the fiscal windfall from 1983 to 1989's economic boom and literally forced the Bank of Canada to ratchet up interest rates in pursuit of price stability. Ontario's proposed \$37 billion in deficits over the next four years undermines Ottawa's fiscal restraint and may jeopardize the Bank of Canada's inflation targets, which will also jeopardize the interest rates in this country."

Madam Speaker, when the hon. member wants to quote Dr. Courchene he should quote him fully.

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CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance also and deal with a particular group of Canadians who have experienced severe problems as a result of this government's economic policies.

The minister will know that two years ago this House unanimously agreed to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. The government has no guidelines to achieve the elimination of this national disgrace, even though Canada's poverty rate is second only to the United States among developed nations. The Prime Minister has agreed with the United Nations that children should have first call on the resources of this country.

As the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Prime Minister, he must take responsibility for the cap on CAP, cuts to health and post-secondary education and the deindexation of family benefits, and so on, all programs which have hurt children. Can Canadian children take this to mean that the Minister of Finance does not agree with the Prime Minister that children should have the first call on Canada's national resources?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member observed that Canada's record in this area was second in the world, and I think that that should not go unnoticed.

The income and unemployment support to families, particularly in respect of children, amounts to about \$7.5 billion annually. I indicated in the House just the other day that we have doubled the child care expense deduction for pre-school children; created a special initiatives fund and implemented a new supplement to the child tax credit; the child tax credit was increased by almost 50 per cent starting in 1986; launched initiatives to counter family violence. All of these things are clear indications of the government's support and particularly its priority in dealing with the problems that face children.

We consider our children very important to this society but, more importantly, for the future of our generations to come.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, the record for Canada shows that Canada is the second worst nation for child poverty. Only the United States has a worse child poverty record than Canada has. That is the record, Madam Speaker, that this government has to answer to.

In committee meeting after committee meeting, poverty support groups and child advocacy organizations have asked a very simple question: Does this government hate children? Because that is what their policies show to those organizations that experience poverty first hand.

What does this minister have to say to those Canadians who understand poverty and who say that this government hates children?

• (1130)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): That is a categorically false allegation, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member takes issue with the fact that I contend, and justifiably so, that this government has taken very positive action with respect to children. That has been recognized by the United Nations. The United Nations has classified Canada, based on a human devel-