

Oral Questions

directly and make their case to the committee and not ask that things be changed before there is discussion.

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[Translation]

COUP IN HAITI

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, there was a coup in Haiti against the elected government of President Aristide.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Prime Minister of Canada on the position he has taken in this respect.

Mr. Speaker, my question is as follows and it is directed to the Prime Minister: Is he prepared to repeat to the House, the Haitian community and Canadians across this country, what he has done and what he intends to do to ensure that the situation gets back to normal in Haiti and President Aristide is reinstated as the democratically elected president?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to President Aristide last night. He is more determined than ever to resume the presidential mandate he was given by the people of Haiti. I also discussed the situation in Haiti with President Bush, the President of Venezuela and the Prime Minister of Jamaica. They all share my feelings of outrage at this coup. They are all determined to see the government elected by the Haitian people reinstated. Canada's objective, Mr. Speaker, is quite simple: We want the general, the dictator, to leave and President Aristide to be reinstated as the democratically elected president of Haiti.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Canadian entrepreneurs are encouraged to export in order to survive. Today we see that the dollar has gone up again. We see that there is almost a 5.5 per cent spread between U.S. treasury bills and our treasury bills. Surely to goodness there is enough room to send a signal

to the governor of the Bank of Canada to lower interest rates so this country can start exporting again.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is incorrect. There is about a 2.7 per cent spread on three-month bills and that is the one that is followed. The hon. member knows that interest rates have come down and the spreads have narrowed. That should be a good sign.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The spread is still large enough that there is enough room to manoeuvre on those interest rates. Bankruptcies over the last year are up 21 per cent. Canadian companies are fleeing this country. When are you going to announce some kind of a national action plan to allow these exporters to become competitive and stay alive in this country and not leave?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is true there have been a rash of bankruptcies, but I remind the hon. member that they have levelled off. Growth is reoccurring in the economy. The United States in the last quarter was still in a recession. As I indicated, this is the worst situation in the world since 1945. Canada cannot be immune from the world. It is a combination of issues that have to be taken into consideration.

We are concentrating on attempting to get the fundamentals right. Fiscal consolidation and control of inflation are the keys to sustainable recovery, sustainable growth and price stability. That will create a buoyant economy with job creation and the kind of economic activity we will see right across the country from sea to sea.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC'S CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Two areas in which Quebec expected powers to be transferred were culture and communications. The federal proposals ignored these demands although they were confirmed by a number of commissions, including Laurendeau-Dunton, Pepin-Robarts, Macdonald, Bélanger-Campeau