

Oral Questions

of the industrial strategy that he has told us is on the way and will be introduced shortly?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, we want to increase job opportunities for Canadians, particularly in the areas where they live. I appreciate that my hon. friend is in effect trying to build up interest for our forthcoming announcements in the area of industrial strategy. I hope my hon. friend will be patient and hear the announcements and I hope that he will have the same level of interest but with a higher degree of support.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOBILITY OF LABOUR

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who apparently is confirming that his senior minister has, in fact, revisited Walter Gordon's 1957 proposition of depopulating various areas of Canada to the general disadvantage of the nation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, again if I may direct my question to the minister about the suggestion that the cabinet should actively seek ways to reduce the impediments to mobility and adjustment caused by unions, professional associations and provincial practices. Would the minister indicate, first, if that is one of the reasons that his government is so adamant in having a mobility clause put in the government's Charter of Rights proposition? Second, how does the minister propose to denude or depopulate the various areas of Canada? Third, what has the minister in mind when he says that he wants to counter the unions, the professional associations and the provincial practices that restrain the type of movement that he has in mind?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I do not accept or confirm the premise with regard to my hon. friend's question that what he has is a document that represents a decision or policy of the Government of Canada as such. In any event, I think Canadians generally feel that we should strengthen the common market in this country, which means maintaining and strengthening opportunities for Canadians to have job opportunities in every part of the country. I think this is a healthy idea, even though, as far as I am concerned, the focus has to be on strengthening opportunities for work in the regions where Canadians make their homes.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): My question is again directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As

the minister is undoubtedly aware, the document submitted by his senior minister to cabinet makes virtually no reference to FIRA whatsoever. Would the minister indicate where this puts his proposition with respect to FIRA? Is it no longer a priority? Has he been overruled? In short, is it true that he has absolutely no clout in cabinet whatsoever? Is it absolutely true?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I do not believe it would be wise for my hon. friend to put forth the premise in his question that whatever he has in his hands involves a document reflecting a decision of the Government of Canada as a whole. The position that we stated with respect to FIRA was that stated in the Throne Speech. As I have said before, and I shall repeat here, we are presently discussing the timing and the manner of dealing with what we said in the throne speech in this regard. I only remind the House of the very strong comments with regard to this matter that were made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs yesterday. They are comments worth repeating and worth remembering.

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THE ECONOMY

STATEMENTS MADE BY MINISTER

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question also directed to the same minister. The minister's policy and statements with regard to government intervention and foreign ownership are clearly contrary to the philosophy in this cabinet document on economic development, at page 19, if he wishes to refer to it. They are clearly identified as one of the key reasons why there are high interest rates in the country today. Is the minister's contribution to the very high level of interest rates the main reason why his approach to industrial strategy has been shunted aside by his cabinet colleagues?

● (1420)

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, if I am not mistaken, interest rates have come down some three percentage points since their record high level in August. I am sure all of us, while continuing to be concerned about the issue, look forward to and hope for continued movement in that area. I am not accepting the premise of the hon. member's question that what he has in his hand reflects in any way the decision of the government as a whole.

Mr. Clark: Perhaps they did not tell you.

Mr. Gray: What he is talking about as my policies are the policies put forward by this party during the election and confirmed in the throne speech. They are policies with which I