

changes which he is contemplating so that Canadians will know just what budget we are dealing with?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, Canadians are dealing with a budget which was approved twice by the House of Commons on non-confidence votes which were moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

An hon. Member: It was revised since.

Mr. MacEachen: That is the budget, and that is the fiscal framework. If any particular measures are adopted by cabinet, they will then be announced to the House of Commons—

Mr. Crosbie: By whom?

Mr. MacEachen:—and the hon. gentleman will have an opportunity to decide to what extent they will have affected the underlying restraint theme of the budget.

PLANS UNDER REVIEW BY DEPARTMENT

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of Finance. We have the unseemly charade of a number of ministers proposing plans in an attempt to be seen as doing something. Yesterday, the minister said that he did not have any other plans under review in his department. Would he confirm that to the House today? Is he saying that there are no other plans under review in his department?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, during question period yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked me if I would reply to his concern about a specific program related to job creation which was under consideration by the ministry.

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. MacEachen: I said no to that question. The answer is correct. I would remind the hon. member that it is not the practice for ministers either to discuss or disclose in the House the proceedings of cabinet or decisions made by cabinet.

Miss MacDonald: You are doing it every day.

Mr. MacEachen: That is well understood. I do not intend to respond by telling the hon. member that a specific program or a number of programs are under review, because these are matters which are the business of cabinet and therefore secret. In a general way I will tell the hon. member that we are constantly monitoring various proposals that have been brought forward. We introduced a number of specific programs in the budget, and we are continuing to monitor programs. When the cabinet reaches decisions they will be announced in the House in the usual manner.

Oral Questions

CAPITAL COST ALLOWANCE

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, what we are trying to do here today is to avoid another debacle similar to what we had on November 12. If we can learn from the minister what proposals are under review in the ivory tower of his department so they can be discussed in the open with the people whom they will affect in Canada, then we can have a proper understanding of what might happen.

● (1425)

Specifically, is the minister considering any change in the capital cost allowance to make it applicable in a different way so that job creation can take place in the first half of the year? The proposal in place now will leave investment to later in the year and push off the creation of jobs to the last part of this year, but we need them right now.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, it is not under consideration at all to remove or eliminate the proposed changes to the capital cost allowance. If the hon. member wishes a specific answer, that is the answer to that question.

There have been a number of representations made by various groups with respect to the application of the capital cost allowance to their situations. Obviously these matters will be under consideration. I hope they will be under consideration by members of the House of Commons as they consider tax measures. We have spent considerable time in the standing committee in the course of this session considering various tax proposals and, indeed, there was a number of changes adopted. I expect that process will continue because it is a good and healthy process.

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THE ECONOMY

REQUEST THAT BANK RATE BE STABILIZED

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Virtually everyone in Canada has now asked that interest rates be lowered. This includes the premiers, members of this House and, in fact, members of the Prime Minister's own party.

The Prime Minister will admit that he is responsible for the policies of this government and how they are carried out. I think the statement made by the Prime Minister yesterday revealed that he has lost touch with what is happening. He said that the difference between the bank rate and the rate of inflation has traditionally been the same as it is now. That is not so. In 1976 the rates were about even. The bank rate of 14.87 per cent announced today is almost three percentage points higher than the rate of inflation. If the Prime Minister really believes that the margin should be the traditional margin and still is, will he then lower the bank rate to 12.1 per cent, and stop stick handling with the future of the Canadian