

Oral Questions

importance of our birthright and our connection with the Commonwealth of Nations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—PROSPECTUS FILED WITH U.S. SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. We have now had an opportunity to review the preliminary prospectus filed by Canada with the SEC in Washington, covering the issue of \$750 million in foreign bonds to be sold in that country, and the prospectus indicates:

—the bonds will be free of all present and future taxes imposed by Canada or any province thereof or by any taxing authority thereof or therein—

In view of this, would the Minister of Finance indicate why it was felt advisable—indeed, even necessary—to propose such a luscious deal to those who might be buying these bonds?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, at this moment I do not have any comment. I will look into the matter. I do not have the text that has been used by the hon. member, and I would like to review it before I answer.

Mr. Stevens: I would have assumed that the Minister of Finance would have reviewed this prospectus thoroughly, and I am rather surprised he is using the “out” that he does not know the wording. Let me ask a further question. The prospectus also states that the underwriting agreement which presumably will be signed by the government and various underwriters will be conditional upon there being—

—no material adverse change or any development involving a prospective material adverse change in the financial, economic or political conditions of Canada from those set forth in the registration statement.

My question to the minister is whether officials in the Department of Finance have received an unqualified legal opinion that the deficit, which is estimated to be \$14 billion in the current year, is not a material change which would break this contract, bearing in mind that such a deficit might be 50 per cent larger than the deficit disclosed in this prospectus.

Mr. Chrétien: I am glad that the market does not take the hon. member too seriously, because he is always throwing about some big figures and starting rumours that have no basis in reality. That is why I know those people do not pay too much attention to the hon. member.

Mr. Stevens: If the minister wishes to end the rumours to which he is referring, would he indicate in the House today the budgetary deficit for the fiscal year 1979?

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Chrétien: I will be delighted to give that information to the House when I introduce my next budget.

REGISTRATION OF BONDS STATEMENT FILED WITH UNITED STATES SEC

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): My question is to the Minister of Finance: it relates to the prospectus issued by the government which states, on page 36, that a registration statement relating to the bonds on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission contains further information. Given the fact that last Wednesday the minister gave the unconditional guarantee that no information would be made available to the SEC which was not made available to the House of Commons—as reported at page 3562 of *Hansard*—will the minister now table in the House the registration statement relating to bonds so that we may have all the information available to the SEC?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when the time comes I will be delighted to give that information to the House.

● (1417)

Mr. Gillies: May I point out, with respect, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come. That statement has been made available to an agency of the U.S. government, the SEC; it is there now. The minister gave the unconditional guarantee that he would give no information to the SEC that he would not at the same time make available to the House. In keeping with the agreement the minister made in this House last Wednesday, I am asking him to table that statement in the House today.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I said in the House last week that any information provided to the Securities and Exchange Commission of the United States would already have been made public in Canada. I have not altered my opinion and in due time I will table that paper in the House.

[English]

Mr. Gillies: When will the minister make those documents available? They will be no good to us five weeks from now. I want them made available today because the minister guaranteed last Wednesday that he would. Last Wednesday the minister said that when information went to the SEC, nothing would go to the SEC that was not made available to the people of Canada through the House of Commons. That statement is in the hands of the SEC today and I want it tabled in the House of Commons this afternoon.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has no problem with humility; he wants to order me to table those things.

Mr. Gillies: You said you would.