

number of small businesses are benefiting from these measures.

I should like to point out, Madam Speaker, that over the last few months we have succeeded, through the co-operation of all sectors, in reducing inflation. This has also allowed us to reduce interest rates by over 5 per cent for the entire business sector. That is what is important in the sense of creating a favourable environment for further investment. Everyone is now able to borrow at a much cheaper cost than they were able to a few months ago.

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SHIPBUILDING

DECLINE IN EMPLOYMENT—PRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT REVIEW POLICY

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The Minister will know that at the end of last March there were 18,000 shipbuilding jobs in the country, and at the end of October there were less than 12,000 jobs, and that this is a serious problem. The contracts are drying up fast and the bottom of the well is in sight.

While the Minister's Department has been lollygagging over releasing the shipbuilding review policy, and while the Minister has been doing the same thing for the past two and a half years, \$1.1 billion worth of domestic shipbuilding has gone to foreign markets.

My question is the same one that I put to the Minister of State for Economic Development last week, to which he was unable to give an answer. When is that policy coming forward and what encouragement will it contain for unemployed shipbuilding workers?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, as I indicated in the House the other day in answer to a question from a colleague of the Hon. Member, we spent a great deal of time last summer and fall on the shipbuilding policy and we hope to make an announcement shortly. Even while that policy was being discussed, several contracts were landed by Canadian firms with the assistance of the Government of Canada. As I think I indicated to the Hon. Member several weeks ago, the Saint John shipyard landed a \$100 million plus contract for a semi-submersible drilling rig. The company was assisted in that, to a large degree, by the Government of Canada.

CONSTRUCTION OF FISHING TRAWLERS

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same Minister who apparently did not hear my original question too well. I asked him what is going to be included in that shipbuilding review. I will give him a little help. Will it contain provisions that will alter, for instance, current policies of the Department of Fisheries

Oral Questions

and Oceans regarding the purchase of trawlers offshore in foreign markets for use in the fishing industry in the Atlantic provinces? Or, on the other hand, will it espouse policies such as those recommended by the Hon. Member for Saint John, that the private sector must start stockpiling unusable vessels like so many sticks in the lumberyard, before the Government is prepared to step in and take an interest in the plight of unemployed shipyard workers?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, when the policy is announced by the Government of Canada the Hon. Member will be one of the first to see what it will encompass in the shipbuilding industry.

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

REFLECTION OF GOVERNMENT LIABILITIES

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, my questions relate to the Auditor General's Report, tabled today. My first question to the Minister of Finance is one that I put to him on October 29 regarding the Public Accounts of Canada.

The Auditor General again points out the very serious situation that has arisen because of the Government not having its books in order. Some \$14.5 billion in statutory appropriations are not recorded, international development assistance loans have been overvalued by \$3.9 billion, and the total understated liability of the Government of Canada is shown as \$17.9 billion. If any business or individual submitted an income tax return on the basis of books kept as the Government of Canada keeps its books, they would be nailed for income tax evasion.

I would like to know what the Government is going to do to put the books of the country in order so that they will fairly reflect our financial situation.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I answered this question some time ago, and my answer still stands. It is a complex issue on which there is a division of opinion. Different accountants have different points of view on the matter. Perhaps the Hon. Member would care to note that not all the assets belonging to the Government of Canada are calculated either. For instance, what value would he put on our national parks such as Banff or Jasper or to go even further, how would he calculate the value of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, which belong to the Government of Canada? What value would he put on offshore resources? There is no evaluation being done of these assets, and it is something the books do not show either. So once again, it is a technical and a complex issue which is still being debated by the accounting profession.