

While confusion reigns over Liberal intentions on the Manitoba question, the Government is engaging in a process with regard to the Yukon and Northwest Territories that can only be destructive to national unity. In a speech I made last month dealing with Manitoba I appealed for tolerance, and called for passage of a made-in-Manitoba solution to the bilingual problem. The Government of Manitoba made that valiant effort. The Conservative opposition prevented the passage of that legislation. The matter will now go to the Supreme Court.

The federal Government, which urged the passage of Manitoba solution, is not moving in a similar manner in the Territories. The Government refused to wait for an initial court decision there. It acted without consulting the elected Assemblies, without consulting native representatives, and without allowing for a made-in-the-North solution. Those who for their own reasons claim that the federal Government is ramming French down their throats will use the method by which the Government handled this matter to create division within our nation, and to promote hatred.

The federal Government must act where Legislatures fail to protect minority rights. That is its constitutional obligation—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member's time has expired.

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EMPLOYMENT

PROVISION OF SUMMER JOBS FOR STUDENTS ADVOCATED

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, many thousands of students will be entering the job market within days. Those students face a bleak and dismal future when it comes to finding jobs. All governments must do everything possible to provide meaningful summer employment for these students.

All across the nation, municipal, provincial and federal Governments are not sufficiently concerned with efforts to generate these needed jobs. Some of the job-creation programs are excellent. On February 28, 1984, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Blais) unveiled his Department's Youth Training and Employment Program. However, this solution is just tickling the problem. Surely the Minister can find the means at least to triple the size of this worth-while program, creating 15,000 jobs rather than 5,000 jobs.

Canada's ability to be a leader of nations or to be simply a follower is contingent upon our providing youth with all of the education, experience, and opportunity possible. To do less in a country which has so much to offer is unthinkable not only to our citizens but to the world.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

INCREASE IN INTEREST RATES—COMPARISON WITH SITUATION IN GERMANY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I am sure he is aware that interest rates have again risen today, having gone up 20 bases points on top of the 20 bases point increase this week, and this trend will probably continue over the next little while. My question to the Minister deals with two other countries.

Germany lives side by side with France and has continually experienced interest rates which are three or four percentage points below those in France. There is a tremendous amount of trade as well as great interdependence between the two economies. Would the Minister tell us what we in Canada must do to develop the same degree of independence from high United States interest rates?

An Hon. Member: Go to Germany.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, one member of the New Democratic Party just suggested to me that I should tell the Hon. Member to move to Germany. However, that will not be my answer.

The Hon. Member knows that the sizes of the French and German economies are more similar than are the sizes of the American and Canadian economies. The level of independence between Canada and the United States in terms of size is certainly very significant. The possibility for Canada to have what would be a totally independent interest rate policy is a possibility which is of an academic nature, I would say. We have discussed this in the House and in parliamentary committees. The issue was also raised with the Governor of the Bank of Canada on numerous occasions.

We can see that the inflation rate is as low as possible, we can increase productivity as much as we can, and we can be as competitive as possible, and perhaps even more competitive than the United States. In that event we would grow faster and might have more room for lower interest rates. However, that obviously implies that we in Canada would be in a situation of lower inflation and higher productivity than the United States on a consistent basis and in many instances, and we would need the readiness to accept a lower standard of living in order to compete. However, that, very shortly, is the answer to the question.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, the Minister was obviously groping. I think that he was less convinced by his answer than were we on this side of the House.

IMPACT OF INTEREST RATES—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Minister that Switzerland is right next door to