

other, and the parties confirm that the state of war between Lebanon and Israel has terminated and no longer exists—”

[*Translation*]

Does the Prime Minister intend to emphasize the need for making a lasting peace in that part of the world by inviting Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and to sign the agreement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I agree that it would be much better if Syria were to adopt the position recommended by the Hon. Member. I do not know whether the Department of External Affairs intends to transmit this suggestion to the Syrians. The negotiations that took place were very complex, and I do not know to what extent or at what point Syria was involved. It is therefore difficult for me to suggest that things might have been different if the negotiations had been conducted in a different manner. I really have no idea. The negotiations, as far as I know, were conducted without Canada being informed, and I believe that the solution proposed by the Hon. Member would of course be an excellent one. However, I do not know how Canada could persuade Syria to adopt this position.

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[*English*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Last fall the Prime Minister appointed a new Minister in charge of the Foreign Investment Review Agency. In the first seven months of his mandate the new Minister has made sure that FIRA approved more than 95 per cent of the applications that came before it. Keeping in mind that FIRA screens less than 10 per cent of foreign expansion in the first place, can the Prime Minister explain why the Government has lost all interest in ensuring that foreign investment in this country offers some significant benefit to Canadians? This is the highest approval rate in the history of FIRA.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it may be a higher rate, but my recollection is that the approval rate over the last ten years has varied between 85 per cent and 95 per cent, or perhaps 90 per cent and 95 per cent. I do not see any change. Perhaps it is because foreign investors now know that Canadians are demanding with much more stringency that they bring benefit to Canada when they propose a foreign investment scheme. The lawyers who represent them have probably learned from our experience of the last ten years that there is no point applying for foreign investment approval if you are not going to be able to demonstrate that it will bring a definite benefit to Canadians.

Mr. Nystrom: Madam Speaker, I think the real reason is that the Government has changed the threshold rate, has

changed the definition of small business, and has streamlined the Agency.

Oral Questions

ELECTION CAMPAIGN PROMISE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether it is his intention to implement a campaign promise made in 1980 that he would strengthen FIRA to make sure it had the ability to screen all expansion of foreign investment instead of only take-overs and new investment. He made that promise again in the Throne Speech in 1980. The Prime Minister made that promise. Is it his intention to keep that promise to the Canadian people?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, we did move from a situation where we were only screening take-overs to now, new investment by existing companies. I think that is definite progress.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION— ADDITIONAL PERSON YEARS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, who has been in the House during Question Period for only one-third of the sitting days since he introduced his budget, my question is addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

One of his Department managers has been forced to advise his staff to stop reading books, magazines, and newspapers during work hours and to work a full day for a full day's pay. Further, the manager suggests that when employees do not have work to do, they go to their supervisor and request work.

In view of the obvious under-employment in his own Department, how can the Minister justify the addition of 1,500 person years to his Department in both the Main and Supplementary Estimates, or is this his idea of work sharing?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, first of all I should like to point out that the Hon. Minister of Finance has been representing this country abroad at a number of very important international finance meetings. I think it is a little unfortunate that the Hon. Member opposite would take that kind of cheap shot when we are trying to ensure that the best interests of the country are being protected and represented in international forums throughout the world. I think his activities are certainly far more productive than the activities of the front bench opposite who are saying nothing about anything.

As far as the question is concerned, I think it is a derogatory question. I happen to know that the public servants in my Department, faced with a substantially increased load on the unemployment insurance system and the job-creation system, have been performing a remarkable service and providing a