

*Inquiries of the Ministry***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****ENERGY**

TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN FEDERAL AND ALBERTA GOVERNMENTS ON MATTERS OF POLICY

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I should like to lay on the table copies of correspondence between the government of Canada and the government of Alberta having to do with the relationship between the two governments in energy policy matters.

* * *

FINANCE

DISCOUNTING OF GOVERNMENT CHEQUES AT USURIOUS INTEREST RATES—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43 I wish to make a motion which relates to the lending of money at usuriously high rates of interest of up to 1,000 per cent against the anticipated receipt of unemployment insurance cheques, income tax rebates, pension cheques and other benefits provided by law, a practice which I first drew to the attention of the government in early February. I would therefore move, since persons engaged in the practice can only operate as a result of a legal loophole:

That in the opinion of this House the government should immediately bring forward legislation which would ensure that the practice of discounting government payments to individuals, at usurious rates of interest to the recipients of benefits provided by law, is placed under the provisions of the Small Loans Act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Selkirk. It requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there such consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent and the motion cannot be put.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**FINANCE**

UPWARD MOVEMENT OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—GOVERNMENT POLICY—CANADIAN OPTIONS—PLANS TO ASSIST INDUSTRIES PREJUDICIALLY AFFECTED

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. I am sure he is sufficiently familiar with the subject to be able to give me satisfaction. In view of the upward movement of the Canadian dollar in relation

[Mr. Speaker.]

to the United States dollar, is it the policy of the Canadian government to continue a free float of our dollar?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would be much happier to allow the Minister of Finance to deal with that question at a later date, but I would like to advise the Leader of the Opposition, at least in a general way, that the present policy of the government in that respect has not been changed.

Mr. Stanfield: Having regard to the existing situation according to the understanding between Canada and the United States and the other countries in the International Monetary Fund is Canada limited to a choice between a free float or clean float and a fixed rate of parity exchange? Specifically, would it be possible for Canada to maintain a float but also associate with it some restriction on the movement of short-term capital? In other words, what are the options under the existing understanding arising from the last discussions?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I am now so far away from my studies in economics that I am not sure I can comprehend all the ramifications of this question. All I would want to say, aside from commenting on understandings that may have been reached, is that the policy of the government has been made clear on more than one occasion, and it is that the Canadian dollar is allowed to seek its own level on the market as a result of normal international market forces.

Mr. Stanfield: I have one further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which I am sure the Acting Prime Minister will be fully able to answer. In view of the upward movement of the Canadian dollar and the effect of this movement on important Canadian industries, has the Canadian government any plans to put into effect to alleviate the difficulties being confronted by these industries, and the possible very prejudicial effect upon employment in Canada as a result of this upward movement of the Canadian dollar?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, at the moment I am not in a position to announce any immediate plans that the government has in mind with respect to the protection of any industry or group of industries. I want to conclude by thanking the Leader of the Opposition for the confidence he has in my ability to answer these questions. I only hope it has not been misplaced.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that the confidence I have indicated is the least I could express to a representative of the government from my own province.

UPWARD MOVEMENT OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—POSSIBLE IMPOSITION OF EXCHANGE CONTROLS—SUGGESTED LOWERING OF SHORT-TERM INTEREST RATES BY BANK OF CANADA

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my supplementary question to the Acting Prime Minister. Is Canada considering the imposition of exchange controls since most European countries are very active with their exchange controls, excluding