

Oral Questions

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should clear our statements of policy with officials from the United States.

• (1440)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I realize the hon. member for New Westminster has a supplementary question, but perhaps he might allow the Chair to complete the first round of questions and return to this matter in a short while. I will then recognize that hon. member for his supplementary.

* * *

COMMUNICATIONS**BELL CANADA RATE INCREASES—INQUIRY WHEN GOVERNMENT DECISION WILL BE MADE**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Communications arising from his announcement last Friday that the government has decided to suspend the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission approving increases in rates and charges by Bell Canada. Can he now inform the House when the government expects to announce its final decision on this matter?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, by an official ruling adopted yesterday by the Cabinet, the decision has been suspended for a 90-day period for the purpose of study.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the minister says the suspension is for 90 days. Can he assure the House that he will within that period make a final decision, which I hope will be to rescind the order of the Canadian Transport Commission?

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier (Hochelaga): Mr. Speaker, I think that in so restricting the suspension of the decision, the government has implicitly undertaken to take a decision, whatever it may be, within 90 days.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a final short supplementary question. Last Friday when the minister made the announcement he made no suggestion of any time limit in respect of the suspension. Will he inform the House why he is now talking about a limit of 90 days for the suspension rather than giving himself enough time to make sure he can complete the studies he requires?

[Translation]

Mr. Pelletier (Hochelaga): I did not mention any date in my statement on motions, Mr. Speaker, but the legislation provides that a decision cannot be delayed indefinitely. When the government suspends a decision, it must change the date set by the commission itself for another specific date.

[Mr. Fraser.]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**VISIT OF CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT TO WASHINGTON—INVITATION BY CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO COME TO OTTAWA**

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the right hon. Prime Minister.

In order to take the opportunity of the forthcoming visit of Chancellor Willy Brandt in Washington next May 1 and 2, has the Canadian government invited the leader of the government in Bonn to come to Ottawa during that trip?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, such an invitation was not sent.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): I would like to ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Does the right hon. Prime Minister not believe that this would prove a marvellous opportunity for Canada to tighten its business ties with Germany and to make the greatest possible use of the vast possibilities of the Federal Republic of Germany?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I share the admiration of the Creditiste leader for that prominent socialist leader in the world today. He has surely played an extremely important part in his country and in Europe. The Canadian government would like to welcome him one day. However, we do not want it to be in connection with his visit to the United States and this is why I answered to the Creditiste leader that we had not invited him on that occasion.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE**EFFECT OF INCREASE IN CHARTERED BANK INTEREST RATES ON GOVERNMENT POLICY—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In view of the increase in interest rates announced by Canadian chartered banks following a similar increase by the Bank of Canada which brought about this action by the chartered banks, will he take the first opportunity on motions to explain to the House the apparent inconsistency in government policy, on the one hand proposing lower taxes to stimulate the economy and on the other authorizing the Bank of Canada to increase interest rates, which will lead to a parade of generally higher interest rates resulting in slowing down the economy?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is no conflict of policy at all. The Governor of the Bank of Canada made it quite clear that the monetary policy of the bank would continue to be expansionary. I will be glad to deal with the subject, as I said to the hon. gentleman's colleague, at the meeting of the committee on finance of the House of Commons when it deals again with my estimates next Monday night.