

rejecting the facts that the Hon. Member has put forward, I will certainly investigate the situation and take the representations, which the Hon. Member makes very seriously, in the seriousness in which they deserve to be taken.

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MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

DECAYING INFRASTRUCTURES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Once again I will appeal to the Government's good common sense.

How can the Government refuse to assist municipalities renew their decaying infrastructures for sewer, water, roads and bridges when today the Government will propose billions of dollars for nuclear submarines? Where are the Government's priorities?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think it has been said in the House on many occasions that while we are sympathetic to the problems that our municipalities face I think they would understand the difficulties that we have as a Government, in particular the fact that when we took over the reins of government the cupboard was not only bare, it was in a very serious financial debt position, with a doubling of the nation's debt occurring in the last four years of the administration of which the Hon. Member was a member.

Of course, it was most important and very necessary to reverse that trend, to bring down interest rates and to stimulate economic growth. We are now turning things around. Perhaps in the not too distant future, given the solid economic performance, growth and good job creation activities, we might be in a position at some point down the road to look into the matter.

The fact of the matter is that at the present time, as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of State for Finance have stated, it would be a very difficult time to entertain a program such as the one to which the Hon. Member has referred.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, despite the deficit the Government will propose today billions of dollars for nuclear submarines. It has already found \$1 million to renew and paint its offices. If the Government can find money for that, then it can find money to renew decaying infrastructures in the municipalities. Where is the common sense in this Government?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure

Oral Questions

whether the Hon. Member is speaking for his Party in asking us to withdraw from our commitments to NATO and our commitments to defence—

Mr. Allmand: No, no. I never said that.

Mr. Mazankowski: That is what he is implying.

Mr. Allmand: That is ridiculous. We have not had nuclear submarines, and we don't need them.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Hon. Member cannot have it both ways. He and the members of his Party cannot cry about the need for Arctic sovereignty. They cannot cry about the fact that our Armed Forces are not up to snuff. We have to rebuild our Armed Forces and our defence capabilities because, after 15 years of—

Mr. Crosbie: Liberal turpitude.

Mr. Mazankowski: Thank you. Liberal turpitude, was that the word? We now have an opportunity to fulfil our commitment as we said we would do in the campaign of 1984.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NICARAGUA—REPORTED BANNING OF CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock—North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Just five weeks ago the Interparliamentary Union held its semi-annual conference in Managua. At that time President Ortega assured us that political pluralism was alive and well there. Right after the conference, the Government put under house arrest the chairman of the Conservative Party in Nicaragua for his attempts to contact delegates. I understand that he has been released but the Party itself has been banned.

● (1200)

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs contact the Nicaraguan Ambassador here, find out the facts of the case, lodge a protest, and see what can be done about this since it is directly involved with the Contadora process?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member not only for his question but for the very detailed report which he provided to me upon his return from Nicaragua with the interparliamentary delegation.

I take seriously the representation he has made to me. Naturally through our Embassy I will want to verify all the facts. If they are as he has told me, I will make that kind of representation to Nicaraguan authorities.