

S. O. 31

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, an editorial in this Monday's *Globe and Mail*, if accurate, poses some real challenges to Canada's new defence minister. Mr. Dale Grant states that "Few Canadians know that in terms of personnel versus the size of the defence budget, Canada has perhaps the most expensive armed forces in the world."

It has more generals than tanks, more officers than privates. I understand that the fragmentation of the military has led to this excessive management growth. Today there are nine lieutenant-generals, who get \$131,000; there are 29 major-generals, who get \$100,000 each; 84 brigadier-generals who get \$94,000; 3,700 majors who get \$64,000 and 7,500 captains who get \$51,000 each.

If I were the minister I would cut, cut, cut this bulbous management team to an affordable and sensible number.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, when does construction of buildings increase by 40 per cent in Seville, 169 per cent in Algiers, and 200 per cent in Buenos Aires? When do furniture costs increase by 500 per cent in Japan over four years?

It occurs when External Affairs is involved in overseas projects.

• (1410)

It is not a new development. The Canadian embassy in Washington had a projected price-tag of \$28 million in 1984, but it opened in 1988 with a final cost of \$82 million.

What could be the reason for these over-runs? The government says that currency fluctuations are to blame. Not so. For example, the Argentinian austral fell against our dollar an astonishing 155,000 per cent. These costs should be declining and not galloping out of control.

Meanwhile, 50 per cent of our diplomats and headquarters staff are over-spending their hospitality budgets, with little concern for cost accountability.

The total cost over-run of these five projects is an astonishing \$102 million. External Affairs has become a sink-hole of taxpayers' money. I call on the minister to get all of her houses in order.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, some people over the last few days have been trying to build a controversy between the Prime Minister and the NDP Government of Ontario.

This is not the kind of bickering that Canadians want to hear. The time for various levels of government bashing each other is past. The 1990s, if Canada is to survive economically and politically, will have to stress compromise and common ground.

Right now, Canadians are struggling in a sea of debt. That debt has come to mean high taxes, and high taxes are sucking the life out of the middle class.

The only way around this is to reduce government spending, government deficits and, ultimately, the taxes that all governments impose.

I rise to ask everybody to chill out, tone down the rhetoric, and concentrate on our common enemy.

There is no question what that is. It is called debt.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, in the past week or so, I had discussions with representatives of the Canadian steel industry and of the Canadian trucking industry.

It is no secret that they are going through some very difficult times.

I am dismayed, and so are many of my constituents, to learn that Canada Post has awarded a huge contract for post office box keys to a U.S. company. It seems to me that if the postal boxes can be made in Canada, it is equally possible for the keys to be made in Canada, thereby protecting jobs and our industries which, as I said, are in difficulty and distress.