

Oral Questions

of Nordair have been on strike since June 24. It has been the longest and most disruptive strike in that company's history. Will the Minister give the House a progress report on the strike, and can he explain why the Government of Canada through its Crown corporation, Air Canada, which owns about 86 per cent of the shares of Nordair, has not acted to bring an end to this strike to get Nordair's planes back in the skies to service the many communities across three provinces in this country?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I inquire regularly as to the happenings in that particular strike. I regret that the strike is being extended. Occasionally, when I do inquire, I am told that progress is being made. I hope that progress will materialize one of these days.

The reason why the Government does not take action in this strike as strongly as it does on the west coast strike, is simply that the Nordair one does not have the same national dimension as the west coast one.

DELAY IN REACHING SETTLEMENT

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, perhaps we can illustrate one example of why progress has not been made. Would the Minister find out from his colleague, the Minister of Labour, why he has repeatedly turned down Nordair's request and has not even acknowledged several requests from the union to appoint a mediator to resolve the clerical workers' grievances? Why does the Government, in effect, appear not to be in too great a rush to settle this strike?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will do that this afternoon and report to the Hon. Member as soon as I can.

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FINANCE

SMALL BUSINESS ACCESS TO CREDIT

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Minister has claimed that 60,000 new jobs will be created with \$1 billion of the taxpayers' money. How many jobs will not be created? How many jobs will be lost because the Royal Bank, other major chartered banks and the federal Government are withdrawing \$1 billion in credit possibilities from the money market in order to bail out Dome Petroleum, \$34 million for Maislin, \$130 million for Consolidated Computers, \$400 million for Canadair, and millions more for Massey-Ferguson and Chrysler?

What does the Minister intend to do to ensure that millions of individual Canadians and small businesses are guaranteed access to credit markets commensurate with their assets so

that they can invest in Canada, and spend in the Canadian economy in order to create real, new and lasting permanent jobs?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that yesterday, for the eleventh week in a row, the bank rate in this country went down. There has been significant progress on the interest rate side since last June.

Second, I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that the rate of savings in this country has never been as high. At the present time it is running at about 13 per cent, and this is more than twice the savings rate in the United States. The Hon. Member also knows, or should know, that there is not a great demand from the private sector for borrowing at the present time. There are a lot of savings presently. There is a lot of money which can be borrowed and, thank God, it can be borrowed at much cheaper rates than used to be available in the past few months.

There has been significant progress on the interest rate side. I hope this progress will be maintained and continued over the next while. Frankly, I do not expect difficulties in terms of the money being available on the market for people who want to borrow for valid purposes.

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● (1140)

NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS

STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He may know, but then again he may not, that Canadians everywhere, including B.C. Liberals and the residents of Meadow Lake who voted yesterday, are overwhelmingly opposed to the testing of the Cruise missile in Canada and the fuelling of the nuclear arms race. They are opposed to the secrecy with which all of these negotiations have been kept. Can the Minister now tell the House the stage of the negotiations, both for the umbrella agreement and the Cruise missile testing agreement? Is it too late for the negotiations to be stopped? Have the agreements already been signed?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I will be pleased to inform the Hon. Member that negotiations are still under way with respect to the umbrella agreement. It is not certain when the negotiations will be completed, but until the umbrella agreement is completed and signed, it will not be possible to enter into any particular project for the testing of any weapons system.