

Oral Questions

believe those policies are right and we are going to pursue them.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I say through you to the Prime Minister, Sir, you do not have a government, you have a flat earth society. You are not looking at the reality of our economic situation.

Mr. Speaker: Given the time, I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I put this question directly to the Prime Minister.

In light of his recognition of the serious structural difficulties in the economy, will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister of Finance to take actions to bring down interest rates and the exchange rate so we can begin exporting again and represent our full responsibility as world traders?

What is happening is that this government is going into recession.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, if there is anyone in this House qualified to discuss recessions, it is the hon. member and his colleagues.

Mr. Peterson: Then why don't you listen?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the flat earth society in reference to the policies we have followed. Last week the OECD produced a report which indicated that it was in full substantial agreement with the policies followed by the Government of Canada. In August, the World Economic Forum from Geneva indicated that Canada's competitiveness had increased from number 11 position where we were in 1984 to number 4 today, indicating major strides by Canada to achieve a better competitive situation.

In Canada, 1,555,000 new jobs have been created. There have been record profits, record job creation, record reinvestment, record jobs for women, 750,000 people have been taken off the poverty roles. There have been good times, not perfect times, but good times all around, infinitely better times than those of the Liberals and we want to keep them going.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—St-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

How can the Prime Minister continue to pretend that assessment of human rights policies and practices are a concrete factor in decision making in Canada on our aid determination, while numerous international and Canadian non-governmental organizations have condemned the El Salvadoran government for human rights violations, for death squads and for the murders of six Jesuit priests? How can his government receive representatives of the El Salvador government this week in Ottawa to discuss new aid programs for this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has made very clear the position of the Government of Canada with respect to any attacks on human rights in El Salvador, Central America and elsewhere. It is a policy that has been very, very consistent from the beginning. I think it is an enlightened and effective policy.

Further, I think my hon friend will applaud the fact that in the area of human rights, yesterday the government announced the appointment of the Hon. Ed. Broadbent to be in charge of the International Institute of Human Rights. I think that is probably a good move as well.

Mr. Ouellet: I think the Prime Minister should listen to the question and try to answer it. We are talking about El Salvador, with a representative of this government being here in Ottawa to meet with officials of External Affairs to discuss new aid programs, at the very moment when the government in El Salvador is universally criticized for violating human rights.

In the past week, the Salvadoran air force dropped thousands of pamphlets from the air urging the killing of international aid workers it accuses of supporting the FMLN guerrillas. Dozens of churches, humanitarian and community groups have been forced to close their offices after they were raided by security forces.