

DISASTERS

NEW BRUNSWICK FLOODS—ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY UNITED STATES SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, shortly before dawn on Saturday, April 11, 1987, 200 volunteer American servicemen and servicewomen boarded trucks and jeeps at Loring Air Force base in northern Maine and made an historic 20-kilometre journey to help flood victims in Perth-Andover, New Brunswick.

Volunteering their off-duty time, the servicemen and servicewomen put in an unmeasurable effort in assisting residents of this small New Brunswick community ravaged by the floodwaters of the Saint John River some 11 days ago.

• (1415)

On behalf of the 1,900 residents of Perth—Andover and all the people of the Province of New Brunswick, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation as well as my sincere thanks to all of the American servicemen and servicewomen who not only offered a most needed helping hand but also valuable moral support and a shining ray of hope to a community victimized by this destructive natural tragedy.

It is this kind of international co-operation that touches deeply the hearts of all Canadians while leaving a fond memory that will never be erased in the hearts of the people of Perth—Andover.

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THE ECONOMY

RISE IN EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, on March 1, 1986, in attacking the Budget, the Liberal finance critic stated that he certainly would not be surprised to see the dollar at 68 cents. That prediction, along with all predictions made by the Liberal Party on financial matters, is wrong. On Friday the dollar closed at 76.7 cents U.S. and at one point it was trading at 76.92 cents U.S.

Bryan Griffiths, Vice-President of Trading and Treasury Services with the Royal Bank stated on April 11, 1987, that the firmness of the dollar indicates that capital is leaving other jurisdictions and flowing into Canada and that it is a question of confidence building confidence.

The building of confidence is exactly what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has accomplished. His policies have given Canadians the lowest interest rate in the past 10 years. The deficit has been reduced for the third year in a row. The inflation rate has been at 4 per cent over the past two and a half years. Over 700,000 jobs have been created.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Finance deserves our congratulations for giving Canada sound economic management which has resulted in international confidence in the Canadian economy.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

WESTERN ECONOMIC STRATEGY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on July 5, 1984, in Prince Albert, the Prime Minister promised a western economic strategy. On February 18, 1987, in the House of Commons in Ottawa, the Deputy Prime Minister promised a western economic strategy. Three years after the Prime Minister's promise there is a growing political crisis in western Canada.

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister why there have been no public hearings leading to a western economic strategy. Where is the action the Prime Minister promised three years ago?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to respond to that question. Prior to the federal election of September, 1984, the Prince Albert declaration was unveiled containing some 52 specific commitments to western Canada, ranging from agriculture to energy, to mining, to forestry, to transportation. Forty-two of those specific commitments have been fulfilled already.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Action on the others is currently being undertaken.

The Hon. Member knows very well that there has been a dramatic decline in oil prices, agricultural commodity prices and prices in the resource sector. Those declines were actions taken outside the influence and bounds of the Government.

The Government is responding in the best possible manner. For example, we undertook to dismantle the NEP and FIRA and to bring in a \$500,000 exemption on capital gains. Those are just a few examples. We have acknowledged that more needs to be done, and the second chapter is due to be unveiled very soon.

WESTERN PROPOSAL TO REFORM SENATE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we would be glad to take a look at those commitments and responses. If there had been more than a patchwork response in the provinces of western Canada, the Deputy Prime Minister would not have felt it necessary to announce again a month or so ago, three years after the fact, that there would be a western economic strategy.