

that is, the cost of funds, to go to 18 per cent to 20 per cent just before the treasury bill levels were set yesterday.

Mr. Evans: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member should realize that the Bank of Canada has followed a policy of moderation and smoothing of fluctuations of interest rates for a very long period of time now.

An hon. Member: You said it was floating.

Mr. Evans: In fact, during the period in which the government of members opposite was in power, interest rates were brought from a situation where they were above those in the United States to a position of some 2.5 to 3 percentage points below those in the United States.

Mr. Stevens: That is not true.

Mr. Evans: That means the Bank of Canada in fact resisted pressures of the upward move of interest rates then, and the Bank of Canada is now following a policy of an orderly reduction in interest rates, which is in the best interests of the country.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): This is terrible.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker—

Mr. Chrétien: Strike two; now he is going for strike three.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, as it is obvious the acting minister of finance is abdicating his role as acting minister of finance, perhaps I could go to the Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister knows, the parliamentary secretary has misled the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien: Order.

Mr. Stevens: In fact, on March 5 the Treasury bill rate in Canada was 2.5 points behind the comparable level in the United States. Would the Prime Minister indicate to the House whether he is willing to have the appropriate reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs so that that committee can look into the interest rate structure in Canada, such as the Clark government had under way in the previous Parliament?

Mr. Foster: And look what happened to them.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I must take exception to the remarks of the hon. member. He seems to object to any answer that does not satisfy his own point of view.

Mr. Stevens: That is not true.

Mr. Trudeau: Certainly, the parliamentary secretary of any minister is enabled by this House to answer in the absence of the minister. Generally, he is closer to the minister than the acting minister because of the very nature of the portfolio. In

Oral Questions

this particular case, we happen to have a very brilliant economist as a parliamentary secretary—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau:—and I think the hon. member should not complain about getting incomplete answers.

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[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

QUEBEC REFERENDUM—ABILITY OF PATIENTS IN STE. ANNE DE BELLEVUE HOSPITAL TO VOTE MAY 20

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. He is surely aware of the fact that several veterans at the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Hospital in Quebec will only be able to vote at home. Has the minister taken all necessary steps to provide means of transport so they may vote next Tuesday?

[English]

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, in answer to the hon. member, this has been brought to my attention. People who are on the voters' list have a right to vote. Being in the hospital is not a restriction; they can vote. I might say that for some unknown reason there has been a group of veteran patients in the Ste. Anne de Bellevue Hospital who have been denied the privilege of having their names placed on the revised voters' list. I regret that very much, but those who are able to vote will be assisted to vote in the polling stations set up in the hospital.

Also, I will conclude by saying that our staff in the hospital and the Department of Veterans Affairs will do everything possible to get those who decide to vote, to vote; those who are not cared for by relatives or other people.

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● (1140)

ENERGY

SALE OF SURPLUS FUELS

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Madam Speaker, I should like to go back to the question of the maritime pipeline. I think it is assumed that all of us here are trying to get energy into the maritimes, particularly, at the lowest possible price.

Would the minister consider putting a reference before the National Energy Board, along with the present study, to see whether there is a market in the port cities of Quebec and the Atlantic provinces sufficient to warrant going to the producer companies in the surplus areas of propane and LPG fuels, where they are offering this very fine type of fuel at distress