

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, as early as the fourth week after my appointment as Minister of Finance I made an economic statement, which some people called a mini-budget and others a budget, determining rather clearly the financial and fiscal position of the Government of Canada. I said, and I repeat, that I do not think it is useful to have a budget at this time since we had something equivalent to a budget on October 20, 1978. I would like to see the effect of the incentives we gave to the Canadian economy resulting from Bill C-11 which was passed last December, and I think it is quite wise to wait for some time to know the performance of the Canadian economy in the first quarter of the year.

● (1122)

*[English]*

**Mr. Crosbie:** Will the Minister of Finance confirm or deny the suggestion that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is going to have the gall to come before the House within the next few days to ask for an increase in the borrowing authority of the Export Development Corporation to the extent of \$20 billion? If that is the case, why will the minister not tell us what are the borrowing expectations for Crown corporations for this year? Twenty billion dollars is the figure that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is suggesting the Export Development Corporation should have.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, this borrowing is done by the corporation to help Canadian exports, which are on the increase. I am amazed that the opposition do not want to help the export industry of this country.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

REQUEST WAR DISABILITY PENSION BE RAISED TO LEVEL OF 1973 FORMULA

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I have a serious and important question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Given the fact that all signs indicate there may not be much more time for the passing of legislation in the thirtieth parliament, and the fact that this House demonstrated on March 1 that it can put an important piece of veterans' legislation through all stages in a few hours, will the minister do his best to get his cabinet colleagues to agree to a bill to restore the basic rate of the war disability pension to the level that was agreed upon in 1973, namely, that the basic rate be equal to the average take-home pay of the five categories of public servants that were designated in 1973?

**Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, this and many other matters are under consideration in my department.

**Mr. Crosbie:** You are under consideration by the electorate.

[Mr. Crosbie.]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I preface my supplementary with the same point I made earlier. Time is of the essence in this parliament, and these matters are of great urgency to the veterans of Canada and their families. If the minister is not able to get action in this session on the question of the basic rate, will he try to get action with regard to the pensions of widows of disabled veterans, particularly those who receive no pension at all because the husband's pension was less than 48 per cent? Will the minister try to get that through, if he cannot get the other—but preferably both—before this parliament is dissolved?

**Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan):** Mr. Speaker, the same answer applies: This is also under consideration by my department.

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*[Translation]***ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice.

Considering the announcement made recently by the minister that he was going to table a bill to establish the position of ombudsman for Canada, could the minister tell us when he will put this bill before the House?

*[English]*

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I have been working very diligently with my officials in the drafting and preparation of the bill. I hope that work will be completed soon.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST—GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO RESTORE PEACE

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It has to do with the very perilous position the world is in today as a result of the situation in the Middle East. It is perilous to the future of the Middle East, perilous to peace and generally dangerous to the world.

● (1127)

Will the minister enlighten the House as to the information he has on the situation, within the limitations I realize he has to observe? Will he provide an opportunity on Monday for a full discussion of this question because, after all, there is something to which Canada can contribute. We have a particular interest in the Middle East. Could the hon. gentleman also tell us whether, in the event that a peace force is set up—as is apparently being considered by some countries in the western world—Canada will follow the course which it did