

RECOGNITION OF CANADIAN RIGHTS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I too rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to move a motion which I am sure my Conservative friends will support. Whereas last week the Canadian ambassador to the United States said that Canada still offers foreign energy firms a warmer welcome than they can find almost anywhere else in the world and whereas on Friday the United States state department sent a strongly-worded communiqué to the Department of External Affairs protesting the very mild national energy policy in Canada, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Selkirk-Interlake (Mr. Sargeant):

That this House instruct the Prime Minister to inform the President of the United States that the United States should recognize Canada's right to own and control its own resources, especially in the oil and gas field, which assets are owned by foreigners to the tune of 84 per cent and that it is not in Canada's best interest to take part in a continental energy policy.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

* * *

● (1415)

MONOPOLIES

MEDIA CAMPAIGN IN ALBERTA—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Jim Schroder (Guelph): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity and move, seconded by the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith):

That this House condemn the three Alberta daily newspapers which are stirring up regional dissension in order to sell more copies, the profits from which are flowing back to the national monolithic press chains now in Canada.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

INCREASE IN INTEREST RATES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, who was supposed to be here, but who probably could not get through the security. I will address my question to the Acting Prime Minister. A year ago today the government instituted the

Oral Questions

floating Bank of Canada rate. At that time the Minister of Finance said that the government would consider special assistance for home owners if interest rates soared under the new floating rate approach. At that time the Bank of Canada rate was 14 per cent, and today it is 17.16 per cent. The prime bank rate was 15 per cent at that time, and today it is 18.25 per cent, or 3.25 per cent more. It has certainly soared. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce said that he was pleased with the new approach to interest rate policy.

My question to the Acting Prime Minister is this: is the government still pleased with this floating interest rate policy? Also, in view of the fact that rates have soared, will the government now institute special assistance to home owners to help them with these soaring interest rates as was promised by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the government last year?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that, as indicated in the budget, the Minister of Finance is far from being satisfied with current interest rates in Canada. However, the hon. member should also bear in mind that those interest rates reflect the inflationary pressure on the over-all economy. He knows very well that interest rates are one factor in the fight against inflation and that if all economic agents join forces to combat inflation and we manage to reduce the inflationary pressure we will end up with lower interest rates and everybody will be more satisfied.

[English]

Mr. Crosbie: I wish to direct a supplementary question to the same Acting Prime Minister, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: His answer made just as much sense as the Minister of Finance would have made. Would the minister answer the question about assistance to home owners in view of the promise made by his minister last year? Would he also answer this? The prime bank rate in Canada is still 18.25 per cent although the U.S. bank rate has come down from December when it was 21.5 per cent to 18.5 per cent, a drop of 3 per cent, but the Bank of Canada rate and the prime bank rate have not dropped. In these circumstances will the minister now direct the Bank of Canada to reduce the Bank of Canada rate correspondingly, or will the government continue its policy of propping up the Bank of Canada rate and Canadian interest rates? Would he give us a clear answer to that?

[Translation]

Mr. Bussières: With respect to the first point, Madam Speaker, I thought the hon. member was aware of the connection between the fight against inflation and the interest rates so that if on the one hand the government launches a massive attack against inflation and on the other hand makes grants to help not only home owners who need them but also small businessmen, agricultural producers and all groups in society