

*Oral Questions*

allow him to use the only available solution to the problem, deeper cuts in public spending and a revised fiscal plan?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Prime Minister repeatedly within this House in response to questions from the other side say exactly what I said in the budget speech. That is that the cuts in our budget in and of themselves are sufficient for us to reach the 3 per cent of GDP target that we have within three years.

The Prime Minister has gone on to say that within the budget reference is made to the review of government operations which is going to be undertaken by the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal in which we are rethinking the role of government, rethinking the way in which we approach the economy. That is an essential part of our budget and it is an essential part of our ultimate plan to clean up this nation's finances.

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[Translation]

**JOB CREATION**

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance.

At the end of February, Hydro-Québec received the go-ahead from the Quebec government to start construction on the Sainte-Marguerite project, in the Sept-Îles region, where unemployment is very high. At the time of this announcement, Quebec had obtained political assurances from Ottawa that the federal government would support the project. But failing federal permits, the construction of the dam, scheduled to start next week, may have to be postponed.

While he is doing little to create jobs, could the minister at least have the decency not to create difficulties for those who do and will he give us the assurance that the federal government will issue the permits required to allow Hydro-Québec to implement this project which does not interfere with the regular flow of the rivers and will create—

• (1130)

**Some hon. members:** Put your question!

**The Speaker:** Order! The length of questions is becoming a little excessive. I would ask that questions and answers be shorter.

[English]

**Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

When the government announced on February 24 that it had accepted the BAPE report on the Hydro Quebec project it also

indicated at that time that there would be certain steps taken before a permit was issued.

As the member should know, the environment must and will be protected. The Department of Transport is working very closely with the province and all other parties to finalize the permit. It has only been a month since the government has accepted the project. It will not be issued until all the pieces are in place.

I can assure the hon. member that yes, we are concerned that jobs are at stake and yes, we want the project to go ahead; but there are conditions to be met before the permit is issued and we are working relentlessly to make that happen.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, this is a fine example of how cumbersome the federal system is. Will the Minister of Finance give us today the assurance that, by the end of next week, Quebec will have received the necessary authorizations so that work can start in an area where unemployment is running rampant?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal):** On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The negotiations that have taken place regarding the Sainte-Marguerite river are an excellent example of federal-provincial co-operation.

Complete agreement was achieved with the province with respect to project description, conduct and content. At present, a permit is to be issued by Transport Canada. Of course, this is a complex and detailed document and there are still a few pieces of information to be supplied by the Quebec government. The province assured us we would be getting this information shortly. It should be a matter of weeks before a permit is issued, given the full co-operation of the provincial government.

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[English]

**NATIONAL REVENUE**

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

According to a poll released yesterday by Peat Marwick Thorne, one in six Canadians now describe themselves as tax anarchists and feel tax cheaters should be applauded. The main reason given for the attitude was out of control government spending.

Will the minister agree a major step toward resolving this problem would be to cut spending and thereby encourage Canadians back into the mainstream economy?

**Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the government and I want