

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

[Translation]

ALLEGED ABOLITION OF SALES TAX ON  
BUILDING MATERIALS

**Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance a supplementary question.

Since the government apparently intends to repeal the sales tax on building materials will this measure be retroactive?

**Mr. Speaker:** I draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that his question is hypothetical.

[English]

## POSSIBLE CONTROL OF BANK PROFITS

**Mr. John Burton (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that three banks have now announced substantial increases in profits, is the Minister of Finance giving consideration to any control over bank profits in developing his policy statement for next week?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, according to long-standing custom of the House I really cannot say what I am going to include in my statement next week.

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[Translation]

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATO—APPLICATION BY SOUTH AFRICA FOR  
MEMBERSHIP

**Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the hon. Minister of National Defence.

Can he tell us whether he is aware of a request from South Africa to become a member of NATO and which position Canada intends to take in the matter?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of such a request, but it seems evident that South Africa is not located within the North Atlantic region.

**Mr. Laprise:** I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister tell us if there have been any talks between NATO and South Africa about the protection of the Cape route and the Indian Ocean against Soviet ships on the Indian Ocean?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there have been talks on this subjects and I doubt that there will be any.

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[English]

## AUDITOR GENERAL

## SUGGESTED WITHDRAWAL OF BILL

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the

[Mr. Benson.]

universal opposition, he will now agree to withdraw Bill C-190?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I do not know if the hon. member is seriously suggesting this, Mr. Speaker. As the House knows, the bill was drawn up by the government following the directions given to it by the committee chaired by a Conservative member and of which, I understand, the member asking the question was also a member. If it is the desire of the House to withdraw this bill, we will certainly give it most serious consideration, but it seems to me the opposition is in the curious position of reproaching the government for drawing a bill which follows exactly the instructions given to it by the committee.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Is the Prime Minister not aware that this party, irrespective of the views of the committee, was, is and still will be totally opposed to the principles of this bill? I would also like to ask the Prime Minister—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Baldwin:** I would also like to ask the Prime Minister—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Baldwin:** —if he will agree—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member knows the reservations which the Chair has about asking questions about a bill on the order paper, discussion of which has not yet been reached. That is clearly anticipating a government order. I allowed the hon. member to ask the question because I felt guilty about having disallowed his questions so often, but I suggest we should not enter into a debate at this point.

**Mr. Trudeau:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Baldwin:** On the point of order—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Prime Minister rises on a question of privilege. I believe a question of privilege has precedence over the hon. member's point of order.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member put on the record that the government knows that the opposition are opposed to this bill. I do not know how we could know—

**Mr. MacInnis:** That is not privilege.

**Mr. Horner:** That is no point of privilege.

**Mr. Trudeau:** The privilege is that we are told we know something—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** That's a mistake.

**Mr. Trudeau:** —and I say we cannot possibly know it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. May we have order.