

Oral Questions

It has been reported that Revenue Canada has already leased expensive office space across Canada to administer the GST, a tax that has not even been approved by the Parliament.

How can this government, at a time when it is slashing programs for veterans and closing women's centres right across this country, justify wasting taxpayers money to set up expensive offices to house his tax police when this regressive and unfair tax has not even been approved by the Parliament of Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me draw my colleague's attention to the fact that it is not just while this party has been responsible for the government of the country but in the previous Parliament in 1980 to 1984 in the case of the Petroleum Gas Revenue Tax Act, the Forward Averaging bill, the Share Purchase Tax Credit, the Refundable Business Investment Tax Credit and the increase to the child care expense deduction, the government of the day, the Liberal Party that he supports, made expenditures in anticipation of legislation being passed because a government does have a specific responsibility to do that.

Colleagues have complained about this, but let me refer the hon. member to the Auditor General's report where he said: "The government will need to give the planning for the GST the priority and the resources required to ensure the successful delivery of this major initiative." The successful delivery starts on January 1, 1991 and we must be prepared for that.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, the minister's defence of his government's policies and his own tax policies would be laughable if it weren't so pathetic.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. Can the minister tell us whether or not his department has conducted any studies to determine the compliance costs of administering the goods and services tax, what level of non-compliance he expects, and how his own tax police are going to treat those poor, small businessmen and women who run afoul of this ill-conceived, complex and unfair tax? What are you going to do? Is the minister going to—

Mr. Speaker: I think we have the question.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member might be interested in knowing that part of the resources that we will be devoting to the goods and services tax are to help Revenue Canada people meet with small business people in their offices to help them understand the goods and services tax, how it affects the cost of their purchases, how it affects the prices of their goods and services so that they can be in a position on January 1 to be able to comply with the tax.

Surely my hon. friend would support this type of assistance to the small business community.

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BILL C-43

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the new Minister of Justice.

The Minister of Justice has indicated publicly that she is in favour of women being able to determine their own reproductive choices.

On International Women's Day will the minister listen to the women of Canada who are saying to her and to her government that the abortion bill will limit women's access to abortion in this country? Will the minister listen to women's organizations across this country who are saying that women must have the fundamental right to choose whether or not they will bear children, and will she withdraw this criminal legislation?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I question whether the hon. member's question is in order. The bill has had second reading in the House and the government's position on the bill has not changed, notwithstanding the change in the incumbency of the Minister of Justice.

I have made my personal views on reasons for supporting the bill very clear in my speech in the House during the second reading debate and will be pleased to discuss the bill further with the standing committee at the end of its deliberations.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I think I heard that the answer to the women of Canada was no, that she will not withdraw that bill. Polls tell us that 62 per cent of Canadians are opposed to this government's plan to recriminalize abortion.

The minister, as I said earlier, is on record as saying that she is in favour of choice for women. The minister,