

working in concert to bring about, in a co-operative way, improvements to stimulate growth and strengthen the economy, not only in Canada but indeed around the world.

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance talks about accelerating the recovery but StatsCanada, as recently as Friday in its leading economic indicator, said that the recovery continues to “decelerate” in this country.

The government has made some small recognition that there is a problem in announcing the reduction in the down payment today on housing from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, but that is a small recognition. If you want to change consumer confidence, Canadians’ confidence, the feeling of confidence in this economy there must be a change of economic plan.

I ask the Prime Minister: Prime Minister, we have a new Minister of Finance, is it not time to get rid of this used budget and bring in a new economic policy for jobs in Canada?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I can only assume, by the tone of the hon. member’s question, that he wants the deficit to go up, inflation to go up and interest rates to go up, because he cannot have it both ways. We have to deal with the fundamentals.

He talks about negativism. I have here the February 1 *Financial Post*: “Financial markets point to recovery”. February 3: “GDP hits upswing by summer”. Quoting Ruth Genner, senior economist of the Toronto Dominion Bank: “I think we stand in a much better position than most of us realize. I think the worst is behind us and we are coming out of this recession.” That is the kind of optimism, that is the kind of hope and that is what will inspire confidence.

**Mr. Speaker:** We must proceed with a question of privilege.

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## PRIVILEGE

### CUSTOMS TARIFF

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River):** Mr. Speaker, I have forwarded a copy of my draft remarks to members opposite and to you, Mr. Speaker. They run some 12 or 13 pages. This is a question of privilege in relation to the failure of the Minister of Finance to lay

## Privilege

before Parliament an order made pursuant to section 59(2) of the Customs Tariff.

The facts on which my question of privilege is based are simple. On December 30, 1988 the Governor in Council passed an Order in Council enacting the order respecting the suspension of privileges granted under the free trade agreement pursuant to section 59(2) of the Customs Tariff. The order was registered as statutory order and regulation 89-54 and was published in the *Canada Gazette* on January 6, 1989. This order was made for the purpose of delaying the elimination of Canadian tariffs on certain plywood and related products in retaliation for a U.S. decision not to lower its own tariffs as required under the free trade agreement.

Subsection 59(5) of the Custom Tariff provides that—

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River is presenting to the Chair and to the House a question of privilege. I should advise the House that I have had considerable notice of it. It is a complicated matter and I know that all hon. members would want to give to the member the courtesy of listening carefully to the points he is making in order of course for an appropriate response to be given if that is necessary.

I would ask hon. members to give the hon. member the attention that all hon. members deserve.

**Mr. Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I know that our colleagues are delighted to be back and they have a lot of views to exchange among themselves here this afternoon.

In any event, this provision required that the order respecting the suspension of privileges granted under the free trade agreement be tabled in this House on April 21, 1989 at the latest. I repeat the date, April 21, 1989. In fact this order was laid before the House on December 12, 1991, some two years and eight months after the expiry of the tabling deadline fixed by Parliament in the Customs Tariff.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the failure to table this order for nearly three years after it was made amounts to contempt of this House. I want it to be clearly understood by the House, however, that while the principle of ministerial responsibility, in the words of section 59(5) of the Customs Tariff, requires that we hold the minister accountable for the failure to table the order at the time appointed by the statute, I fully recognize that the practical responsibility, if I can use that expression, lies with the minister’s servants.