

Oral Questions

It is important that the House know that a capital financial agreement, a five-year financial plan signed in 1990, provided a \$1.2 million allocation for the construction of a sewage treatment plant out of a total capital budget of almost \$6 million. That money has not been allocated for the purpose for which it was intended. I have instructed my officials to meet with the chief and council immediately to ensure that the conditions of the funding arrangement are lived up to.

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EAST TIMOR

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Last night CBC's *Journal* aired a documentary exhibiting the historic and ongoing brutality of the Indonesian government against the East Timor people. The Indonesian government's own report of the November 12 killings is unsatisfactory and subsequent reports of retaliation against the witnesses must be investigated.

I have asked this question before. I repeat it: Will the government insist that the UN make an independent investigation of the East Timorese killings and the subsequent abuses against the East Timorese?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have told the House before that the day after this event I raised it with the foreign minister of Indonesia with whom I was meeting in Seoul, Korea and expressed Canada's condemnation even at that early stage before we had all the facts.

In the meantime, I know that Canadians have found the information that has come forth, not just because of the video last night but as the news has come out about the incident, as reprehensible as does this government.

We cut our aid to Indonesia as a result of that. Some other countries did do it but have since reinstated it. We have not made any change in our policy toward Indonesia at this stage.

I am encouraged that the Secretary-General of the UN will be sending a special envoy to Indonesia and we will look for some results from that meeting.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): My supplementary question is for the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

In 1975, Indonesia illegally invaded and took control of the independent country of East Timor. Since then, the Canadian government's reaction has been terribly quiet.

Will the government today join the European Community in asking the new Secretary-General of the United Nations to call a negotiating session between the parties directly concerned, such as Portugal, Indonesia and representatives of the government of East Timor?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the government supports the United Nations in the steps which still have to be made with respect to the special envoy who was sent to Indonesia by the United Nations. The Secretary-General agrees to send someone. After that, perhaps we could go on to the other steps.

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[*English*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to whomever is answering on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

All the government will know that when the GST was introduced the Prime Minister and the government promised that it would not be charged on the necessities of life. Now the Minister of Finance has imposed the goods and services tax on water on 26 communities across Saskatchewan, and he has done so retroactively.

I would like to ask the minister this: Will the government keep its promise and axe the tax on water?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am not sure what the hon. member is talking about. If he had given me notice before Question Period, I would have looked into it for him and got him an answer.