

when he returns from his visit to Mexico, and I hope to discuss this issue very soon with the Mexican ambassador in Ottawa.

Obviously, we must take a very careful look at the situation. A great number of people have died and we certainly deplore that, but it is very important to let the Mexican authorities take appropriate measures to solve the problem, in their own country.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I share the minister's concerns, and our party will support every effort made by the minister to protect human rights. However, I would like to know if, when he talks about taking a very careful look, the minister considers that trade has nothing to do with human rights and that the uprising of natives is but an unavoidable adjustment episode in a period of economic development?

[English]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to remind all hon. members in this House that in 1990 President Salinas created the National Commission of Human Rights which is now entrenched by law. We believe the Mexican authorities themselves want to take measures to ensure that human rights are respected in their country.

• (1500)

Second, I want to assure hon. members that through the NAFTA Canada will now be working more closely on a number of issues with our Mexican friends. We hope the criteria established here in Canada and in the United States in regard to human rights will be followed by the Mexicans.

Clearly through NAFTA we could be in a position to help the situation there. Hopefully the Mexicans will involve their people in this process and those who are poorer than others will benefit from NAFTA.

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#### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

In the throne speech the government stated that it would replace the goods and services tax. It did not outline any specifics or set out any proposed timetable.

Will the minister please tell members of this House and thereby all Canadians what he knows to this date about the substance of his party's new proposed tax?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, may I congratulate you on your position and congratulate the member on his question.

Time is short. I would be unable to tell the House in the time available everything I know on this subject. I will say, however,

#### Oral Questions

that the Prime Minister has made it very clear that the goods and services tax is to go. A replacement obviously must be found because the government and the country needs the money and the revenue. Therefore, the process for eliminating the tax and finding an appropriate new tax will indeed be announced in due course by my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of National Revenue rule out categorically in this House today that any tax reform or tax invented to replace the GST will not in fact simply be an increase in taxes?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly the wish of everybody on this side of the House, and I am sure the other, that the burden of taxation on the Canadian public be reduced rather than increased.

However, as has been already discussed today in this House by many members, including the leaders of all parties, we have a problem of deficit, we have a problem of debt, and we can make no such promise at this time that there can be no change in tax levels in any particular area of taxation.

We trust that we can in fact deal with deficit and deal with debt and at the same time have no increase in taxation levels.

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#### THE BUDGET

**Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt):** Mr. Speaker, today in his annual report the Auditor General stressed the need for reconciling the convention of budget secrecy with open consultation in debate to allow greater parliamentary input before budgetary decisions are made.

Will the Minister of Finance inform the House as to his position on opening up the process to provide an opportunity for greater input earlier in the process to enhance the participation of members as well as ordinary Canadians in the very important task of dealing with Canada's debt and deficit?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec)):** Mr. Speaker, the member's question is quite obviously very much in the line that this government wants to take and we certainly do support the recommendations of the Auditor General.

We are committed to the elimination of budget secrecy, to open budgeting. As the House was not meeting, the announcement of the deficit was made not by a press release but at a meeting at the University of Montreal involving students from that university and McGill.

We had a public meeting of 40 economists from across the country who dealt with the economic projections and where the country was going. We had a very successful pre-budget consultation meeting in Halifax last week. We expect to have an