

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, let me remind my friend of what the Finance Committee report of March 15, 1988, stated: “—to publicize the details of the new tax and the relevant social policy transfers”. This brochure is publicizing the details of the new tax that we propose to bring in on January 1, 1991.

We also have a brochure which publicizes one of the key social policy elements, the GST credit, which improves the position of many senior citizens and low income people in this country.

This is information for which Canadians have asked. We are responding in a responsible way by providing that information.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, last night two Calgary journalists for CFAC television were held for several hours by the Israeli army after a raid on a village in the occupied West Bank.

Another Calgarian, a citizen of Palestinian descent, was also picked up by the Israelis. This man, Jamil Qasqas, was escorting the two journalists as they interviewed his family in the village.

I would to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if he has any information regarding the whereabouts of Mr. Qasqas? Is he, a Canadian citizen, still being detained by the Israelis? What has External Affairs done to secure the release of Mr. Qasqas?

Finally, I would like to know if the minister has had any communications with the Israelis regarding the detention of the journalists, Brenda Finley and Wayne Borowiec, and what their status is in Israel today?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and am pleased to report to the House that, as a result of interventions by the Government of Canada in Israel, the three persons named are now free.

I understand that Mr. Qasqas is on his way, or will shortly be on his way back to Calgary. It may be that the two journalists in question will remain in the area. They had, from the beginning, access to the consular services

of the Canadian Embassy. We are naturally seeking a fuller report from Israeli authorities as to the circumstances, but the three are free.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In his absence, I will refer it to the acting minister. It is in regard to his so-called environmental agenda for Canada. It is a mystery to Canadians and to the minister, it seems.

Canadians are getting tired of polluted promises. The minister has hailed his five-year plan as the most dramatic environmental reforms in Canadian history, and yet the energy minister two weeks ago in Calgary told oilmen: “Don’t worry, don’t be nervous, you have nothing to fear. There will be trade-offs”. He said that the action plan is not the final word.

Will the minister meet the real needs of the environment and not the self-interest of his political colleagues?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, as members of the House know, the Minister of the Environment is working on an action plan that has been supported very fully right through from the Prime Minister and other members of cabinet.

In Calgary approximately two weeks ago when the Minister of the Environment could not attend for personal reasons, I said that there would have to be trade-offs. I think anyone who has looked at environmental issues, who has looked at reduction or stabilization, for example, of CO<sub>2</sub> levels, knows there are trade-offs. In fact, if he takes a look at some of the papers coming from the Ontario government, he will find that the trade-offs that are being examined not only have to be examined, but have to have a public debate, and that is why the action plan is coming forward.

**Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent):** Instead of consulting with environmental groups and the public, the minister is working in shadows. Canadians wonder why clean air, clean water, and safe land are such a secret, such a mystery, so confidential and classified.

Will big business dictate the environmental policy of this government, or do the people have a say?