

Oral Questions

Professor John Crispo stated: "Very few manufacturers of significance are going to be able to pocket the reduction in the MST. Competition is going to force them to pass it on to us".

The Economic Council of Canada stated: "The reality of the world market-place will force business people to pass through the great bulk of the tax".

The Canadian Construction Association stated: "The selling price for all kinds of construction, in our analysis, is found to be lower under GST than under the current tax system".

This week in the consumer affairs committee the same question was asked and the same answer comes. The Consumers Association of Canada said: "Consumers should benefit from the elimination of the MST. GST does a better job of collecting revenue than the old tax it replaces".

From hundreds of witnesses across Canada we are getting the same answers; consumers will benefit from the savings, manufacturers will pass on the savings when the 13.5 per cent manufacturers' sales tax is removed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The special committee studying the proposed companion resolution presented its report earlier today. I want to commend members of the committee for their efforts.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): The unanimous report which they have presented may well provide a basis for resolving the present constitutional impasse.

Therefore, can the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House if the Prime Minister invited all the provincial premiers to a conference for discussions for which the report tabled today will provide a basis? If so, can he tell

this House and Canadians exactly when this conference will take place?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, of course, I and my party want to associate ourselves with the words of the Leader of the Opposition in complimenting all members of the committee on the very important work they have done and the manner in which they carried it out.

The members of the committee had a very challenging task. They demonstrated the highest level of co-operation, dedication and commitment. Indeed, all Canadians and all members of this House will be eternally grateful for the excellent work that they have carried out.

As the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, the report has just been tabled today. The Prime Minister and the minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs will be discussing this with all the premiers. It is hoped that the report will provide the mechanism for those who have found it not appropriate to support the Meech Lake process to do so as a result of the recommendations made by the committee.

As soon as there is some indication that progress can be made in that regard, I am sure that the Prime Minister will take the necessary appropriate action.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the context of the present constitutional impasse—some have even called it a crisis—the committee in its unanimous report found that the June 23 date is a political reality. Canadians have said that they want their political leaders to roll up their sleeves, get to work and lead the country out of the present constitutional impasse. Surely this is the message of the committee's unanimous report.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, why is the Prime Minister losing precious time? Why is he insisting on having some type of advance agreement before calling a First Ministers' Conference? Why will he not announce an early First Ministers' Conference today?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows that the report has just been tabled. The necessary and appropriate work will be done toward ensuring that all the players within this very important exercise will, in