

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing unusual about the dinner that Mr. Hartt attended. It was a—

Ms. Copps: I'm organizing one right now.

Some Hon. Members: Shush.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): It was a matter of a dinner that was not partisan in nature at all. It is consistent with the attempt of the Government to discuss with some of the business leaders the policies of the Department of Finance, and to develop a greater degree of understanding of the policies of the Department of Finance.

Ms. Copps: And its loopholes.

Some Hon. Members: Shush.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): As well, it is consistent with a range of dinner meetings which Mr. Hartt has had, and proposes to continue to have that will move in this same direction.

[Translation]

POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The dinner in question was hosted by the Progressive Conservative Party's chief fund raiser.

[English]

Will the Minister or the Prime Minister agree to extend the same courtesy to the chief fund raiser of the New Democratic Party who might like to invite Mr. Hartt to a closed door dinner session to ask questions in order to obtain a better idea of government policy? Will the same courtesy be extended to the fund raiser for the Liberal Party? Will Mr. Hartt be asked if he might undertake to accept such invitations if they are forthcoming?

An Hon. Member: If they aren't Senators!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hartt was brought up in a good Liberal household. His father was a Member of Parliament. He has helped the Leader of the Opposition from time to time in his capacity as a candidate. He is also doing great service to his country by serving a Progressive Conservative Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Hartt has demonstrated, over time, a very even-handed approach to the people with whom he wishes to meet. I am sure that if there are further requests, even from Liberal Senators, that Mr. Hartt would be pleased to respond.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree the Government needs all the help it can get.

PREPARATION OF BUDGET

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the other point I would like to raise in terms of this consultation is that we read, and perhaps the Minister can confirm, that he has commissioned a number of polls in order to get a few ideas for his forthcoming Budget. Will the Minister tell us whether or not this is true? Will he undertake to make public the results of these polls since they are being paid for by the people of Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there has been certain speculation on this matter. We have been very open with practically all of the information requests which have been received by the Department of Finance. Something in the order of 85 per cent of the requests have been approved by the Department of Finance under the access to information legislation. We will continue to be forthcoming in our approach, as I have been in the wide range of consultations with a broad range of Canadians on matters relating to the Budget.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—REQUEST FOR
RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT STUDIES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In my hand I have a list of all 42 studies conducted by the federal Government on Canada-U.S. trade negotiations. Given that the Ontario Government has now released its studies indicating large job threats, will the Government release these studies and permit Canadians to carry forward this debate with the complete assurance that everything is being made open and up front to all Canadians?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for repeating the question of his soul-mate from Windsor which was raised and answered earlier today.

Mr. Broadbent: Howard McCurdy asked a question?

Mr. Axworthy: Do you want to rearrange that a little bit?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. These fellows all look and sound the same to me. I apologize for that.

Mr. Axworthy: You are as confused on this as you are on the trade issue. Confusion reigns, obviously.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry speaks of confusion. His is contagious.