

An Hon. Member: Where did you find this guy?

Mr. Karygiannis: If members across the hall listen, there might be something they want to hear about human rights.

In August, while visiting England to celebrate the Ahmadian centenary, a request was submitted regarding a number of Ahmadian refugees in England whose visas were expiring and faced deportation back to Pakistan. They expressed their wish to come to Canada.

The Ahmadian Muslims are facing many forms of persecution in Pakistan. An official at the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Gerard, gave me assurances that he would give this matter his immediate attention. To this date nothing has been done.

Would the minister responsible instruct her officials to make haste in processing the necessary documentation for these people so that they may finally get on with rebuilding their lives?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, it might be of some use for the hon. member to know that the Deputy Prime Minister left at approximately 11.40 because he had a scheduled flight to take and a previous engagement. I think it might be useful for him to know that when such things happen it is not always within our own control, and that he was here as is usually the case doing his duty.

I can't say I was very surprised by the remark. Is this not the member who suggested that we should throw Quebecers into the ocean, I think? It is the same type of remark.

I will be very happy to take up the representations that the hon. member has just made and to transmit them this day to the Department of Employment and Immigration so that it may offer its usual rapid response.

• (1150)

Mr. Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, I did approach the Minister of Employment and Immigration a week and a half ago and I was expecting an answer. However to this date I have received nothing.

My supplementary question, if somebody would have the decency to answer it, is: Would the government instruct the minister responsible to make haste and instruct her officials in England who are fully aware of

what is going on to proceed with these particular cases because their families back in Pakistan are being persecuted?

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, I will take up this matter with the minister as rapidly as possible and get back to the hon. member as rapidly as possible.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. According to the Association provinciale des constructeurs d'habitations du Québec, the GST, and I quote: "—will increase the price of homes by at least 2 per cent and in the long run restrict access to home ownership in Quebec". Since there is already a lack of affordable housing, how can the Minister justify this new sales tax on housing, and furthermore, how is he going to deal with the problems that will ensue?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the numbers that the hon. member has put before the House.

We have demonstrated in the technical paper that as a result of the very generous housing rebate the impact of the GST on the price of housing will be quite limited when you take into account that there is an existing hidden sales tax, a sales tax that I am sure the hon. member does not agree we should keep. We need to move to this new sales tax system, but there is that existing sales tax in the price of a new house which is about equivalent to the net of the GST less the housing rebate. So in the large majority of communities across the country there will be no increase in the price of houses.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, the minister has the wonderful capacity to dismiss everybody else's figures on this and all of the criticisms of the GST.

It is an amazing thing, not just the construction people in Quebec but elsewhere in Canada have shot the department's figures full of holes on the housing side. The minister knows that the tax on housing is unfair. He knows that its burden is going to fall most heavily on the major cities like Toronto and Vancouver, and he knows