

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 1, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern about the government's policy in which my country will no longer have a NATO presence in Europe. It is my opinion that Canada is an integral part of the NATO community. The special role of our presence as the bridge between North America and Europe is very important.

I do not want to beat around the bush. I am concerned about the creation of Fortress Europe and of Fortress U.S.A. I call upon the government to reconsider its decision to remove Canada's NATO troops from Europe.

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PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Communications has declared the Canadian publishing industry is enthusiastic about his new policy. Well, the communications minister should inquire again. The Association of Canadian Publishers recently passed a motion stating that the federal government has retreated from policies aimed at achieving Canadian ownership and control of book publishing and expressing firm opposition to permitting foreign takeovers of Canadian owned firms in book publishing and distribution.

The printing industry which employs 78,000 Canadians has, since free trade, lost \$160 million annually and 1,700 jobs, resulting as well in a \$330 million print deficit equivalent to an increased loss of 200 per cent since

1988. Why so? Because this government has not placed strict country of origin rules on the importation of printed products from the United States such as the Americans have done. Will the government stand up for Canadian printers, put the needed rules in place, strengthen our Canadian publishing and printing industry, and establish a level playing field which will maintain Canadian jobs and their income?

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TAXATION

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, in these difficult days of economic recession and constitutional conflict, it is hard to understand why some measures of government collaboration are not seized when they are so obvious. One such area is the opportunity for harmonizing provincial sales taxes and the federal goods and services tax.

Not only would this simplify sales tax service to all citizens and make the system more consistent, but most important, it would provide a realistic means to ensure a fair and balanced sales tax application toward cross-border shopping.

There may seem to be an obvious short-term political detriment to provincial governments which might take that step, but surely the long term benefits are compelling. Just yesterday, for example, in the New Brunswick budget, a request was made for federal collection of sales taxes on alcohol and cigarettes. Why not integrate the collection process in a complete and comprehensive way?

One other reason involves real dollars that provinces presently collect twice from industry on overhead costs and other indirect inputs. Under the GST these revenues would disappear, but similarly they would reduce the costs of manufacturing and make our export products more competitive.

Harmonization of sales tax systems is a goal worth pursuing.