

*Oral Questions***RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION**

IRAN—IMPRISONMENT OF BAHÁ'Í LEADERS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I want to say that the Baha'i community of Canada is aware of the consistent support which the Government has rendered to the international efforts to halt the persecution of the Baha'i community in Iran. Indeed, we just co-sponsored a resolution condemning the violation of human rights in that country.

In view of the deteriorating and life-threatening situation in Iran and the continuing arrests of many of the leaders of the Baha'i community, what additional steps can the Government take regarding the 17 specifically named individuals of the Baha'i community who are imprisoned and whose lives are in imminent danger?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I know that his interest in the Baha'i generally and in the 17 individuals in particular is shared by other Members of the House. We have made and will continue to be making representations as strongly as we can in Iran.

In addition, we have, as the Hon. Member has mentioned, co-sponsored a resolution in the United Nations which will be coming to a vote very shortly with respect to Iran and which we hope will have some effect upon its attitude toward the 17 individuals the Hon. Member mentions.

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[*Translation*]

TAX REFORMCOMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS—SOCIAL JUSTICE—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In its report, the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee confirmed what several groups had stated about the Conservative Government's tax reform and three budgets to the effect that they are unfair to Canadian families, especially large families.

Could the Minister give Canadian families the assurance that he will correct these inequities before the Holiday season by awarding the third child twice the amount of the child tax credit, that is \$130 instead of \$65, and that this money will be converted into a refundable tax credit for the poorest families in Canada? Could the Minister give Canadian families the assurance that these changes will be made before the Holiday season?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is aware of the changes that we have made during the course of the lifetime of this Government, such as increasing the Child Tax Credit, accelerating the payment of the Child Tax Credit, introducing the refundable Sales Tax Credit. These measures help people with large families.

I indicated yesterday that I was not prepared to comment specifically on a number of recommendations in what I thought was a very good report on the part of the Finance Committee. I take his statements today as further representations.

[*Translation*]

CHILD TAX CREDIT AND YOUTH OLDER THAN 18 YEARS OF
AGE—INQUIRY WHETHER ADDITIONAL FUNDS WILL BE
PROVIDED

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Yesterday, in reply to the hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides concerning a minimum margin tax on all major banks, the Minister was not quite clear whether this would be acceptable to big business. I should like to ask the Minister why he would have no hesitation in indexing family allowances or in reducing the incomes of our poorest families while being afraid to tax the corporate sector. Could the Minister answer that immediately? The people are sick and tired of waiting. After three years, could the Minister indicate whether he will put forward the additional money for child tax credit purposes as well as for children over 18 years of age?

● (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is the same as my answer to the first question.

If I could, let me comment on some of the elements of the Hon. Member's preamble. If he wishes to look carefully at what has been proposed in the White Paper on Tax Reform, he will see on page 67 that there are a number of proposals to increase the taxes that are paid by financial institutions, including banks and insurance companies. If the Hon. Member adds them all up he will find that they are in combination the most significant part of the increase in taxation of the corporate sector.

Clearly the objective of the Government is to ensure that the financial institutions do pay their fair share of tax, and do see their effective tax rate increase quite substantially over what it has been in recent years. I agree with what the Hon. Member and other Members have stated that this has been too low a level of taxation; but that has been the objective, so our objectives are shared. We now have to discuss the means of achieving that objective, and that is what we will be studying between now and the tabling of the Ways and Means Motion.