

Oral Questions

There is other information that the Conference Board does not have that supports the position that we have taken all along in this case. This information will become available and the Hon. Member will see it at the end of June or thereabouts when we provide this information for him.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the Minister reproaches me for getting excited. I am excited because I am worried about \$5.5 billion that is being taken out of the hands of Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): I am excited because I am worried about the poorer regions of this country, as perhaps the Minister ought to be.

At a time when the Government is withdrawing from regional development and is withdrawing from unemployment insurance, how can the Minister justify imposing a tax which discriminates against Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario, western Canada and the Province of Quebec? How does this Minister justify in the name of Heaven imposing a tax which the Conference Board states: "will take the most money out of the hands of poorest Canadians"? That is why I am excited.

Some Hon. Members: Hear hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I stated in my first answer where we have differences with the Conference Board report. I stand by those statements. I think that they are valid. They will be elaborated upon in the analysis of the Department of Finance which will be made available in the latter part of this month.

I also refer the Hon. Member to page 18 of the brochure entitled *The Goods and Services Tax*. There is a bar chart there which shows that every province, every region of the country is favourably impacted by the imposition of this new sales tax and the replacement of the existing sales tax which is widely regarded as being a drag on the economy.

Ms. Copps: You are a drag on the economy.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Hon. Member has just said that this tax is going to impose a heavier burden on those who are least able to bear that burden. I remind the Hon. Member that there is going to be a generous

refundable sales tax credit. Our goal, as set out in the brochure, is that families earning less than \$30,000 will be better off as a result of the reform of the sales tax system.

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OFFSHORE RESOURCES

HIBERNIA—INDUSTRIAL BENEFITS

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. A quote in *The Globe and Mail* this morning states that the modules for the Hibernia construction platform could be constructed outside Canada, "although that would reduce the project's industrial benefits for Newfoundland and other provinces."

The only thing we were getting from the Government was industrial benefits—three million person hours of industrial benefits. We gave up the retail sales tax. We will not receive a cent in retail sales tax. Our royalties start off at 1 per cent. The only thing that we were guaranteed was industrial benefits. Now the Minister is saying that he is considering allowing Mobil to go back on that commitment.

Is this not just the latest Tory broken promise to the people of Newfoundland? How can the Minister, a Minister with integrity, associate himself with a Government that continually breaks its commitments to people who have the highest unemployment rate anywhere in the country?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I respect the Hon. Member. I say to him, as I said to the people of Newfoundland yesterday, I discussed the Hibernia deal with them very fairly. I obviously cannot go through all of the principal issues involved in Question Period. However, let me give the Hon. Member some of the salient points.

First, the federal Government sticks by its commitment on Hibernia. That includes our financial commitment.

Mr. Nault: For how long?

Mr. Epp: There is no time limit. Perhaps the Liberals have one, we do not.

Mr. Simmons: You did before. What happened to March 31?