

Oral Questions

Mr. MacGuigan: This morning the hon. member for Parkdale-Hyde Park (Mr. Flis) did me the courtesy of consulting me on a resolution concerning the situation in Poland, which I am prepared to accept.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. MacGuigan: If the hon. gentlemen opposite were prepared to allow that, we would be pleased to see it passed.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am afraid that I must interrupt at this time, it being 11.15 a.m. Oral questions.

● (1115)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE BUDGET

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Now that the minister has had an opportunity to discuss with his departmental officials the involvement of Professor Neil Brooks in the pre-budget consultation, will the Minister of Finance explain today why his officials relied exclusively for outside advice on a man who is known to have anti-private enterprise views, and not on the broader group of tax experts that the department has used in the past?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as I said in the House the other day, I was not aware that Neil Brooks had been an adviser to the department. I have no objection to the use of his services, but I would add there have been other advisers as well. The hon. member asserted that he was the sole adviser. There were a number of other persons from various institutions who were called upon from time to time to assist the department, and among these was Professor Neil Brooks.

NAMES OF ADVISERS TO DEPARTMENT

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, would the minister be prepared to make that list available to the House so that we can judge the quality and content of the advice that came to the department during the pre-budget preparations?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Yes, Madam Speaker, I would have no objection to giving the list of all the persons who were called upon to consult with the department prior to the budget. For example, there is a Mr. George R. Lucas, a private consultant. I wonder does the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre find his political flavour unacceptable, or is he going to apply some form of ideological test to Canadians who serve their govern-

ment in this capacity? Maybe the hon. member would apply a test now to Mr. Lucas, or to Mr. Mike White of Moore Corporation, who provided some advice and assistance. What about Peter Wood of Clarkson, Gordon—would he apply the same test to him as well? I just find the hon. member's approach rather indefensible.

RULES AFFECTING SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, the budget has a particularly harsh impact on small business. The minister has altered the rules on interest deductibility, on the Small Business Development Bond, on deferred profit sharing plans, on the dividend payouts of small business, on capital cost allowance, and on capital gains. The lit goes on and on. Would the minister today tell the House why he and his comrade, Neil Brooks, have chosen to attack small business so severely in this budget?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as I have said previously in the House, the benefits to small business, although there have been changes, over all have been improved. For example, in the next taxation year an additional \$50 million will flow to small business. As I have stated, it will be my pleasure to answer point by point the objections that have been raised against the small business package.

I must say that I find the hon. member's use of the word "comrade" rather interesting in light of his leader's motion earlier this morning whereby we are attempting to establish respect for each other in the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EFFECT ON CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Finance. It is the consensus of the small business community that the minister took lots and gave little to that sector of the community. The Minister of Finance is the Grinch who stole Christmas from the thousands of Canadians who are facing mass lay-offs because of the minister's budget measures. The Canadian construction industry says it is in a state of panic because of the changes in the measures affecting capital cost allowances. This is forcing intensive lay-offs, particularly in western Canada. Why is the minister attacking this industry which is made up of small businesses, mainly family firms, which employ thousands of people? How can he collect his revenues if the industry collapses?

● (1120)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I do not accept the premise of the hon. member's question.