

the documents of the Minister of Finance, and they told the Minister of Finance that imposing a tax would be a stupid move. Is the Deputy Prime Minister implying that Conservative caucus Members are completely off course, that they were mistaken when making their recommendation?

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Conservative caucus, including the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, were mistaken and did not know how to read, or would it be quite simply that the Deputy Prime Minister does not want to tell the truth?

[English]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I have attempted here this morning to clear up the confusion that is in the mind of the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Lapierre:** How about the Quebec caucus?

**Mr. Mazankowski:** The Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and myself have all said the same thing.

**Mr. Lapierre:** We don't trust you!

**Mr. Garneau:** The Quebec caucus does not trust you either.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Would you buy a used car from the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Mr. Speaker, I simply reinvite the Hon. Member to read the response that the Minister of Finance gave yesterday. I will repeat it. I am quoting from page 8700 of *Hansard*.

Let me make it absolutely clear. There is no proposal in this document or in any other document in Canada to tax food. That is a fact.

#### FOOD TAX QUERY

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister. It relates to the matter of whether to tax food or not.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Riis:** When the question was put by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre, back on May 28 of this year, he asked the Minister of State for Finance a question which ended this way: "What about food?" Regarding the sales tax: "Is food in or out?" The Minister of State for Finance responded by saying: "You will find out on June 18" whether food tax is in or out. It is now September 3 and we are still asking the same question.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is as it was asked on May 28 by my colleague. Is food being contemplated? Is

food being considered? Is it in or out of the proposals for a national sales tax?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question.

#### WEEKLY FOOD BUDGETS

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Deputy Prime Minister take a number of positions. He takes the position of Wayne Gretzky stick-handling around this issue. There is now a new position. It was not the New Democrats who raised this matter first. It is in the White Paper on Tax Reform which states:

If food and other basic goods are taxed, they would cost more . . . If food and other basic goods are not taxed, their prices would be lower.

This is in his document. He raised it. Are the people of Canada now to expect that, unless there is a statement to the contrary, they can expect their weekly food budgets to be increased, because there is no comment that this tax is not being considered?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, that is using the scare tactics that are quite customary of Members from that side of the House. The author of the White Paper on Tax Reform is the Minister of Finance. He made it very clear yesterday. I repeat again, for perhaps the fourth time, as reported at page 8700 of *Hansard*:

Let me make it absolutely clear. There is no proposal in this document or in any other document in Canada to tax food. That is a fact.

What could be more clear than that?

#### EXCLUSION OF FOOD FROM SALES TAX

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that we did not raise this issue. The Minister of Finance raised the issue, and it is right here. There are diagrams, pages and pages which talk about a food tax. It was not we who talked about a food tax; it was members of the Government who talked about a food tax and who are considering it. Why raise it in the first place?

My question, then, is directed to the Chairman of the Finance Committee who has been studying this issue. My question is very straightforward. Do other countries which have a national sales tax—

**Some Hon. Members:** Order, order!

**Mr. Lewis:** That is not in order and you know it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I regret that under the circumstances it is not in order to put the question to the Chairman of the Finance Committee. Perhaps the Hon. Member could find another way to put the question to ensure that a Minister does respond.