

*Oral Questions***CHILD POVERTY**

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third annual gala for child poverty will take place in the capital tomorrow.

This successful event benefits needy children in the Ottawa—Carleton region. It is sponsored by the Fund for the New Generation, a group of active young people who represent all parties in the House as well as the public, private and university sectors. These young people strongly believe in grassroots community support.

• (1115)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank local merchants, retailers and national sponsors, such as Sun Life, Ryder Travel and Merck Frosst. Additional support is also provided by the Museum of Nature, the Ottawa *Sun*, KOOL-FM and the *Hill Times*.

Honorary chairs are Mayor Holtzman and the Speaker of the House of Commons. They have made the event possible, but they cannot do it alone. I call on members and citizens in the Ottawa—Hull area to go to the Museum of Nature tomorrow night at eight o'clock.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

CANADA'S CREDIT RATING

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after the dollar's wild ride last month and the recent rise in interest rates, yesterday, the renowned rating agency Moody's put Canada's credit rating under review.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Since Moody's explained that its warning was due to the unacceptable levels of the federal and provincial deficits, does the Minister of Finance admit that his strategy to shovel his deficit into the provinces' backyards is making financial markets even more nervous?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. We indicated very clearly to the provinces that our intention was not to shovel anything into their backyards but to work in close co-operation with them to really solve our common problems by putting our fiscal house in order at the federal and provincial levels. I must say that, at our meeting with the provincial finance ministers, they understood that very well.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, around this time last year, the Minister of Finance announced that he would show his true colours in his 1995

budget. We learned this week that the real Martin budget will be the 1996 budget.

Does the minister admit that Moody's warning is based on the financial markets' fear of having to defer the real decisions for another year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our last budget, we took more measures to solve Canada's financial problem than in any other budget in the last decade.

We said that last year's budget was the first phase and that the second phase would be this year's budget. And that is still our strategy.

Now, am I to understand from the hon. member's comments that he is against our intention to notify the provinces in order not to cause any surprises and that he is trying to promote the Conservative policy of causing surprises and offloading responsibilities onto the provinces? Well, that is not our intention.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Since the finance minister's performance aimed at shaping public opinion has gone on for too long and cost hundreds of millions of dollars because of the rise in interest rates, can the minister finally act responsibly and announce today the date of his next budget in order to end speculations hurting the Canadian economy?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I indicated very clearly that we were following a timetable that was set a long time ago. There is a budget every year and we intend to table our budget in due course. At that time, I will be pleased to respond to the hon. member's question regarding the date.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance.

In putting Canada's credit rating under review, the New York firm Moody's based its decision partly on concerns that the next budget will increase taxes.

Will the minister admit that his inability to target tax inequities as well as his refusal to pledge not to increase taxes in the next budget are additional sources of concern for financial markets?

• (1120)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry to contradict the hon. member, but if you heard Moody's announcement, you know that the decision has absolutely nothing to do with the