

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Gauthier:** Are you going to manage his campaign?

I ask the Prime Minister what has changed? Are these Tories so ashamed of telling Canadians what the budgetary position of the government is, or is it that the Minister of Finance changed his mind? If so, for what did he change his mind?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend makes a good point. Maybe it would be a great and significant day for the nation. I will talk to the Minister of Finance about his idea of bringing forward a budget if on the same day my hon. friend can convince the Leader of the Opposition to tell us and the country where he stands on the GST.

I do not want to be unkind or difficult but they are talking about economic credibility. What could go more to the heart of economic credibility than the Leader of the Opposition finally having the gumption to stand up and tell Canadians once on a major issue what he stands for. Either he is for it or against it.

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We understand that pre-budget consultations are going on in Ottawa today. The Minister of Finance may or may not bring in a budget. He has been quoted as saying to the effect that he would not want to saddle a new Tory leader with a five-year budget. Well, Canadians have been saddled with Tory budgets for the last nine years and it would be wonderful to have a change.

Obviously it would be good news not to have another Conservative budget but I think that Canadians deserve to know what this government's priorities are. That is done through a budget.

I ask the Prime Minister if he is prepared to look at a change of course, to look at relief for the 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed, to bring in a budget now that will be based on a full employment strategy for Canada. Will he give Canadians that kind of hope?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to take the views of my hon. friend and convey them to the Minister of Finance who is indeed consulting Canadians in regard to pre-budget possibilities for Canada.

My hon. friend says that it is good news not to have another Conservative budget. She asks for a Conservative budget and then says it is good news not to have one.

I cannot guarantee what the Minister of Finance will say or whether there will be another Mazankowski budget. However, I can guarantee there will not be a Rae budget.

• (1430)

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

I find that the refuge of the government when it cannot support its own policies is to talk about another government's policies. It would be really interesting to hear the government talk about its own policies for a change. I would suggest that the Prime Minister might have wanted to listen to the second part of my question.

While it would be bad news to get another Conservative budget, the government has the responsibility to tell Canadians what it will do, to speak to the the 3.8 million Canadians who are still on welfare, the 1.5 million Canadians who cannot find work, the 4.2 million Canadians who still live in poverty.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, is the government going to spend the next three months only concentrating on one job and abandoning the millions of Canadians with no jobs?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, of course the answer is no. We will continue to work at keeping inflation very low.

We are working at programs that enhance our productivity which has already increased significantly. We are looking at ways to further lower our unit costs which are down by 6.6 per cent compared with the United States. This explains in large part our record exports to the United States and around the world. We are looking at the kinds of policies that create durable jobs in the private sector.

My hon. friend I think perhaps misunderstood what I was saying. She took umbrage at the fact that I appeared to be criticizing NDP policies in Ontario. I was not doing that. I was just agreeing with the auto workers in Oshawa.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.