

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, in answer to a question of a similar nature, I indicated to the House that, as I was going to proceed with numerous consultations for the preparation of the budget, obviously there would be all kinds of speculations in the press about the options I would tend to entertain as the Minister of Finance. I said that I would not comment on those speculations because I was convinced that they would go in all kinds of directions. I should like to advise my hon. friend right away that he will probably see other articles in the next few weeks indicating a contrary direction. The advice I can give him is that he should read all of them as pure speculation. As far as the specific point he raised is concerned, I will take it as representation in the preparation of the budget.

Mr. Wilson: I hope, if the Minister of Finance raises this with his colleagues from the Provinces tomorrow, that he will let the House in on the secret which he apparently wants to hold off until the budget.

SUGGESTED TAX CREDIT FOR HOME RENOVATIONS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, let me give the Minister an example of what I have in mind, the type of tax incentive to which I was just referring. Would he consider a tax credit, for example, of \$5,000 against a portion of costs incurred in home renovations completed over the next six months? Obviously this would help the construction industry. It would stimulate expenditures on furniture and wood products with a high Canadian content and a high labour content, and it would be spread throughout the country. Would the Minister give consideration to this type of plan since it is likely to be more effective than large Public Works programs directed by bureaucrats here in Ottawa, and far broader and more efficient than the current CHRP direct loan program which requires a bureaucratic approval in each case?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his interesting suggestion. I would only remind him that we already have in operation a program for home renovations which provides \$3,000 grants and which has generated something like \$175 million of investment by the private sector. I do not think he has invented the wheel in his suggestion. He only wishes to add more money to it; I will bear that in mind in the preparation of the budget.

Mr. Wilson: You do not understand the difference.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

SCALE OF PRIVY COUNCIL CLERK'S SALARY AND PENSION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I wonder whether the Prime Minister could confirm that on November 5, 11 days after the announcement by Mr. Michael Pitfield of his intention to resign as Clerk of the Privy Council, the Government passed an Order in Council PC

1982-3439 to raise Mr. Pitfield's salary from the eighth decile D-M 3 level to the tenth decile D-M 3 level.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that that action had the effect of increasing Mr. Pitfield's pension by \$1,500 to \$3,000 per year at a time when the Government was acting to reduce the pensions of other Canadians?

Would he also confirm that Mr. Pitfield's salary has been increased 9.28 per cent since the introduction of the six and five guidelines?

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Madam Speaker, I cannot confirm that but I will be happy to look into it. As regards the passage of that Order in Council, my recollection is that it was done effective April 1. I may be subject to correction on that, but it seems to me that that is an action which is taken as regards all Deputy Ministers, all Order in Council appointees. They are done every year on recommendations of the Special Committee from the private sector appointed to advise the Government on senior salaries. If the facts as quoted are correct, I can assure the House that the action was taken as part of an increase given to all senior public servants.

SALARIES OF SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, is the Prime Minister telling us that since the introduction of the six and five principle for ordinary Canadians, senior public servants, on average, generally, have been receiving salary increases in excess of 9 per cent as is the case with Mr. Pitfield? Is that what he is telling us? Also, would he tell the House of Commons on what authority he acted?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, on the first part of the question, the answer is no, that is not what I am telling the Hon. Member. If he looks at my previous answer he will see that he is making up the suggestion and not basing it on the facts.

When the Hon. Member asked me on what authority, I indicated that at least the moral authority came from a committee of private sector people which was set up more than a decade ago and which I believe was called the Kline Committee. But as far as the legal authority is concerned, it was the authority of the Governor in Council to recommend to His Excellency the Governor General, the salary levels of Order in Council appointees.

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FINANCE

FEDERAL SALES TAX PROPOSALS

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. On October 27 the