

*Oral Questions*

the Canadian people and even ahead the Members of this House?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, this is the same process as that followed by previous administrations, including the Government of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, if I am not mistaken. The process is the same, we invite tax experts to avoid the kind of problems we had with earlier budgets, so the situation is the same as in the past.

[English]

## PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, it is not the same procedure at all. Previous Ministers of Finance, myself included, sought all the advice possible, decided how their Budget was to be written, and then closed the doors. This document has already been put to bed. These tax experts can give the Minister no advice now. The document has already been written.

They have been co-opted by the Minister of Finance to try to sell the message across the country. In return for that they get an advantage over their competitors and over every other Canadian. That is exactly what happens.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** The Minister can look for precedents but he will look in vain because this is absolutely unprecedented.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Question.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** How does the Prime Minister respond to this outrageous conduct on the part of the Minister of Finance? Does he not feel that with regard to the importance of this tax reform paper that Minister ought to be fired?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to draw one single fact to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition. This is not a Budget. It is a White Paper. It is a proposal on tax reform.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Why have a lock-up? Why have national television?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Mr. Speaker, we do not have to have a lock-up.

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

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** We are trying to allow people from the opposition benches as well as the media to become aware of the range of things in the paper in order that they can make appropriate comments based on more than just

hearing me speak from my place at eight o'clock tomorrow evening.

The Hon. Member may want to think back to what happened when he and every other Minister of Finance was in office.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Not after the fact.

● (1425)

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** I can give him chapter and verse that, when previous Governments were in office, throughout the year they took the advice of experts from the tax community, whether it be lawyers or accountants, in order to make the process work better and to make the product better.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY TAX REFORM WILL BE KNOWN BY EXPERTS  
BEFORE BEING MADE PUBLIC

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is trying to play with words. Nobody, including the Leader of the Opposition and myself, is blaming the Minister for seeking expert advice.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I see that, 48 hours before public release, a supposedly confidential document has been given to experts who simply cannot be expected to advise the Minister since the documents have all been printed.

So I would ask the Minister why 20 experts, friends of his, are meeting in Ottawa today to study a document which will be released only tomorrow night to the Canadian people and the Members of this House?

[English]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Members for their applause.

**An Hon. Member:** It's not for you.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Let me remind the Hon. Member that this is a White Paper, not a Budget. That is a very clear distinction that the Hon. Member should recognize.

These people have been involved in this process for, I believe, some six or seven months. They have added immeasurably to the process in order to look at the detailed technical aspects from a practical standpoint so that we have the combination of advice from the officials of the Department and the advice from these experts from the private sector, acting as a sounding board. I think that makes a better process and that Hon. Members opposite should be applauding me for proceeding in this way so that we can have a better process.

## MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance does not seem to appreciate the gravity of the situation. We are not talking about consultation. We are talking about a paper that has already been written