

Oral Questions

want to know where the Liberal Party stands on this fundamental issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

NEWSPAPERS' FORECASTS OF WHITE PAPER CONTENTS—
REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is not my words that are at issue before the House of Commons, it is the Prime Minister's words to this House. That is the issue. I will say to the Prime Minister that the truth and the Prime Minister are not on easy terms.

Yesterday morning's *Globe and Mail* contained a front-page story entitled "What to Expect in Tax Reform". On the vast majority of items, the article was right. It was right, right down to the last nickel. *The Ottawa Citizen* carried the same story and it was right almost to the last nickel. How could they have known so accurately? What kind of games are being played here? What kind of advance notice has been given to try to sell the message of the Minister? Who has been co-opted and who is benefiting? That is the question we want to put.

If the Prime Minister does not want to mislead the House, then on the facts as we know them, which are that we had a budget, we had tax changes and we had a Ways and Means motion, he should fire the Minister of Finance. I have respect for that Minister. Under the circumstances as have now been revealed to the House, will he have the dignity to resign his office in view of what happened last night?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is pointing out that a number of the media and a number of individuals from the private sector who have been involved in the consultation process have understood the directions that we are going in tax reform and the objectives that we had in tax reform so that they have been able to anticipate some but not all of the things. That is exactly what we are trying to do. That is exactly why, at my breakfast meeting this morning, members of the private sector who have been involved in this consultation process were very complimentary. They asked me to please make sure that I keep this consultation process as open and productive as it has been because it has made for a better product. That is why we have been able to get eight out of 10 people off the tax rolls.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): That is exactly why we have been able to identify those tax preferences of upper-income Canadians that should be reduced. That is why we have been able to identify those ways that profitable corporations which are not paying taxes should have the situation changed. That is why we have been able to get 850,000 taxpayers off the rolls. These are the objectives of tax reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

INFORMATION GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the same subject and direct my question to the Prime Minister, since he failed to answer the question put by the Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday in the House, in responding to a question by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, he informed Hon. Members that what was about to be tabled was not a Budget but a White Paper, and I will quote his own words in this respect: He said it was not a budget in the sense it did not per se take effect the very same day pursuant to a Ways and Means Motion.

Mr. Speaker, it was this Ways and Means Motion that was used by the Minister of Finance to lay certain tax changes on the Table of the House and inform all elected representatives of the Canadian people of these changes and the date on which they became effective. Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Prime Minister said yesterday in the House, a Ways and Means Motion was tabled containing no less than thirteen tax changes. What we have here is a case of false information given by the Prime Minister to the House, and I would like to ask him why he failed to tell Hon. Members the truth yesterday during Oral Question Period.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows perfectly well that the statement I made in the House and the statements made the Minister of Finance are entirely in line, not only with our tradition and custom—after all, since he is a former Minister of Finance—but with the tradition of parliamentary democracy which is the system by which we are governed, and also entirely in line with the facts that were published subsequently. We are talking about a White Paper that was tabled in circumstances that were perfectly acceptable on the basis of our custom and tradition. There have been many examples, and I know the Hon. Member will end up agreeing with me on that.

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to say what I am going to say. However, the Minister lied in the House yesterday. Since the Prime Minister lied yesterday in the House, since according to his remarks . . .

• (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I know the Hon. Member understands the rules of this place. I ask him to indicate that he recognizes he went too far, and put the question in a more appropriate way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not making things very easy for us. Out of respect for the Chair I will withdraw my remarks, but the fact remains that the Prime Minister informed us yesterday in the House that no Motion of