

*Oral Questions***FINANCE****FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETING OF FINANCE MINISTERS—SIZE OF GOVERNMENT DEFICIT**

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. At their meeting yesterday the Finance Ministers spent some considerable time, I understand, discussing the question of increased spending with a view to creating jobs. I want to ask the Minister of Finance what size of an increase in the deficit the Government is contemplating, and will this increase in the size of the deficit be handled by the federal Government, the provincial Governments, or will it be combined? What is the Minister doing to cut waste in spending, such as the 50 per cent increase in government travel, as well as the 17.1 per cent increase in the administrative costs of Government that I have referred to on a number of occasions in the past?

I ask these questions because it is important that Canadians have some understanding of how big the deficit is going to be, and that it is done in a way that reduces the amount of waste that is present in government spending today.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we indeed had a very constructive and positive meeting yesterday of Finance Ministers. The Finance Ministers agreed that their respective Governments should all pull in the same direction to ensure recovery in 1983 and try to reduce the level of unemployment that we have at the present time. All of us agreed that in the preparation of our respective budgets we would look at ways of improving the economic environment. There have been press reports in that regard.

My friend referred to some of the indications which came out of that meeting. I can tell my hon. friend that we did not discuss the scale of any particular deficit, or increase or decrease in the deficit. We had a general discussion in that regard. There will be further consultations between Ministers. If the Hon. Member is patient, at the time of the budget he will see the size of the deficit planned for 1983. At the present time I am not in a position to indicate to him whether the deficit will increase, decrease, or remain the same.

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, again the Minister of Finance neglected to address my question of government waste and the ability of the Government to cut down on spending.

CONTROL OF EXPENDITURES

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, yesterday there seemed to be some discussion of increased spending on public works and transportation. Obviously the purpose of the increased spending is to create jobs. How does the Minister reconcile this objective with the Income Tax Act and the regulations before us today, which will reduce the capital cost allowance and introduce nine separate disincentives for small-businessmen to increase their spending and thereby increase jobs? Is it the intent of the Government to take that job creation capacity away from small business and

centralize it in Governments where bureaucrats can control the whole process in the country?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend should not be surprised if it is not possible within the limits of the Question Period to answer the three or four questions he decides to ask at the same time under the pretext of asking one question. Therefore I will go back to some of the points he raised. The first one was control of expenditures. The Government has established very strict control on expenditures over the years. In fact, as my hon. friend knows, the Government has appointed a Comptroller-General. That followed on recommendations from the Auditor General and from the Lambert Commission a few years ago. He is an outstanding person who came from the private sector. He has helped very considerably in ensuring that all Departments are exercising very strict control over their expenditures. The President of the Treasury Board has indicated he is reviewing all government expenditures in all Departments to ensure that they are being put to the best possible use.

● (1120)

As far as the question relating to the Income Tax Act is concerned, I remind my hon. friend that the measures put forward in the Income Tax amendments include many provisions which would be of significant benefit to small business in this country, particularly the increase in income eligible for the low level of income tax rate from \$150,000 to \$200,000, and the global deduction increase from \$750,000 to \$1 million, as a whole, in terms of the low tax rate from which the small business people are going to benefit.

This is only one amongst many measures included in that Bill which are benefiting the small business sector. I hope my hon. friend will recognize that and support this Bill so it can get passed soon in order that small business can benefit from it.

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HUMAN RIGHTS**INQUIRY RESPECTING LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE DISABLED AND WOMEN**

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Justice and is in relation to the amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act which have been in the possession of the Minister and the Cabinet of the Government for some considerable period of time. Why does the Government continue to hide this Bill relating to the disabled and women, rather than making it public immediately?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I do not know why my hon. friend would speak about hiding the Bill. I have given him a copy of it.

An Hon. Member: Have you tabled it?