

I have been informed that Revenue Canada has done a calculation on the existing MST content of new housing and has discovered that it is considerably lower than the Department of Finance figures.

Will the Minister next week table the calculations of Revenue Canada and the calculations of the Department of Finance with the finance committee so that the public will know once and for all that the GST is bad for housing and bad for people?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

• (1500)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have said that there is a range of effective tax rates. I have never said that it is just 4.5 per cent. In some communities it is 4.5 per cent, in other communities it is less than that. I have said that it is less than the 3.7 per cent average the building industry is saying that it is.

But when you compare that 3.7 per cent to the 4.5 per cent net GST, that is, the 7 per cent less the 2.5 per cent rebate, the difference is less than 1 per cent. That is the point that I have made time and again. The 1 per cent difference in the price of a house is not going to affect adversely the affordability of housing and that is the commitment that we made.

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I find that answer quite unacceptable and so do the people who want to buy new houses in this country. One per cent on a new house in Toronto is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$8,000 to \$9,000. One per cent in London, Ontario, is \$2,000. One per cent in Vancouver is \$6,000. One per cent in Nova Scotia is about \$1,000. People who want to buy new houses do not need any additional new taxes on new housing.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague says that 1 per cent is \$8,000. That is an \$800,000 house to which the hon. member is referring. This is another example of the Liberals standing up for their rich friends.

We do not feel that it is necessary to protect people in this country who can afford an \$800,000 house. If that is the policy of the Liberal Party, so be it. It is not the policy of this government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Speaker's Ruling

PRIVILEGE

TAKING OF VOTES—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I wish to bring to the attention of the House a ruling on a question which hon. members will remember was raised by the hon. member for Calgary West on Wednesday, January 24, following several recorded divisions that day. Put simply, there was the suggestion that some hon. members may have voted twice.

Subsequently, these incidents were raised by the hon. member for Calgary West. The hon. member claimed, as a question of privilege, that contrary to the established rules and practices of this House, two members voted twice on those divisions. This charge was denied by the members involved, both on Wednesday when the issue was first raised, and again on Thursday.

The issue was extensively discussed last Thursday and I wish to thank all hon. members who made presentations.

On Friday, the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair offered an apology to the House for any unintended misunderstandings caused by his actions during the divisions in question. This apology closes the matter in so far as the question of privilege is concerned.

[*Translation*]

However, as Speaker, I want to make a few comments on the events that took place. It is accepted practice that when the House is considering an item of government policy that is highly contentious, members of the opposition will seek to use any means available to them to delay the proceedings. As we have witnessed over the years the ingenuity of the opposition to find ways to delay the business of government is considerable. Such dilatory tactics, are of course, an important part of the adversarial nature of this place and a legitimate tool for the opposition. At the same time, however, I must point out that any such tactics by the opposition must fall squarely within the rules or practices of the House and I would ask all Hon. Members to keep this in mind.

[*English*]

At no time should dilatory tactics ever detract from the authority or the dignity of the House. In the heat of the moment, members may sometimes depart from the normal courtesies, but the basic respect for our practices must be insisted upon. The Chair would be derelict in its