

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):**—that the rescue package would be successful.

#### NATIONAL REVENUE

##### GULF TAKEOVER—TAX RULING

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. During his absence the former Deputy Minister of Finance stated that in the Olympia & York-Gulf-PetroCan deal, which came before the P and P Committee of Cabinet on a number of occasions, the matter was discussed during the time the negotiations were progressing. Why did the Prime Minister not move during that period to close the tax loophole which will allow \$500 million to \$1 billion of taxpayers' money to be paid out? Why did he not close it when he knew it was going to happen?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to this, the company, O&Y, exercised the right of all citizens, including corporate citizens, under the Act to seek a ruling. The ruling was made objectively by officers of the Crown in the Department of National Revenue, and presumably it became part of a package which allowed that company to make an offer. That transpired in the normal course of business, and it was not for Cabinet, retroactively or at any time in those circumstances, to place judgments upon legislation which had passed the House in, I believe, 1971.

##### GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, we all understand that it was Liberal legislation and that it had been used maybe five or six times. However, I am concerned about the following. Why did the Government, knowing that it would cost taxpayers between \$500 million and \$1 billion, not move during the time the negotiations were being proceeded with, in advance of the deal being consummated, to close that particular tax provision to ensure that Canadian taxpayers would not be ripped off further?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I responded fully in that regard. Canadian citizens or Canadian corporations, under the laws which govern our jurisdiction in tax matters, have the right to address themselves directly to the Department of National Revenue to seek a tax ruling. That is what transpired.

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#### BANKS AND BANKING

##### CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK—ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I find it to be terribly offensive, and I ask the Minister of Finance to clarify for Members of Parliament whether it is a decision of his and the Prime Minister that they will not

#### Oral Questions

answer questions with regard to that subject matter until the Estey Commission reports? Is that what the Minister of Finance is telling the House, thereby in fact resigning from his responsibilities?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the specific question which has been posed, probably have a dozen times, and in many cases using exactly the same words. I do not think that it is an appropriate use of the time of the House.

**Mr. Tobin:** That is not for you to judge.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Nor, with respect, do I believe that it is in line with the rules of the House that I should have continually to answer the same question, time and time again, because Hon. Members cannot get it into their heads.

**Mr. Dingwall:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has not answered the question repeatedly. I charge that the Minister of Finance is involved in a cover-up, and he is refusing—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Is there a question?

**Mr. Dingwall:** Will the Minister of Finance tell the House if he knew in detail about the \$116 million difference? Will he tell the House whether he knew about that particular difference?

**An Hon. Member:** Yes or no.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Andre:** Same question.

**Mr. Rossi:** Harvey, you are not the Speaker; go back to sleep.

**An Hon. Member:** We all heard that.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think it is clear, since we have been told, that the question being repeated will result in the answer being repeated. It does not seem to me to be in the interest of the House simply to keep repeating the same question and the same answer; it just does not seem to me to make much sense.

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● (1440)

[Translation]

#### EMPLOYMENT

##### IMPACT ON QUEBEC OF FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware of the fact that according to figures released by his Minister for External Trade, about 200,000 jobs in the