

Oral Questions

that we are making a major breakthrough by bringing to the agenda of the G-7 meeting the question of the revision of the international financial institutions.

During the course of discussions a number of alternatives will be discussed. The Tobin tax, which seems to be very interesting to the hon. member, is one of many subjects that will certainly be looked at and discussed at that meeting.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the world today international money traders are looking at Canada. They want some kind of feeling of security on where the government is going.

Why do 1970 ideas keep bubbling to the top whenever the Liberals get into their think mode? Do they support the Tobin tax? Yes or no.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are supporting a revision and an improvement of international financial institutions. We will be presenting recommendations in this regard at the time of the Halifax summit.

We have asked a parliamentary committee to look at it. I remind the hon. member that his party is represented on the committee. We hope the representatives of the Reform Party on the committee will make valuable recommendations.

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[Translation]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. At a press conference in Quebec City yesterday, the vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada revealed actual instances of public funds being squandered. Apparently, the federal government offered courses on stress management through humour, and defensive driving courses to civil servants who do not need to drive as part of their jobs. Talk about defensive!

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs admit that these glaring examples of squandering show that the government is unable to end the cycle of waste in the federal administration?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not subscribe to government waste. In terms of program review we have gone through in great detail all the programs and services provided by the government.

In order to get our deficit down, in order to get our fiscal house in order, we have made the most major cuts that have been made in government expenditures since the end of the second

world war. That will help to bring about a discipline and ensure more than ever before that we have the greatest efficiency and effectiveness in terms of the spending of public taxpayers dollars.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in light of the minister's answer, I believe he should have his eyes examined.

• (1450)

Why does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs turn a blind eye to the many instances of squandering brought to his attention by civil servants? Why does he not recognize that he should clean up his own backyard before hitting civil servants with massive layoffs?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not close an eye to any matter brought to our attention whereby we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and services. Any that have been brought to my attention have been or are being examined very carefully.

We do not take lightly the fact that part of our expenditure reduction program involves 45,000 people having to be removed from their positions in the public service. We intend to treat people fairly and equitably in carrying this out and ensuring that we get the fiscal house of the government in order.

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Mr. Bill Bauer and Mr. Gary Carson, both former members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, confirmed that half the IRB members may not be competent to hear refugee claims, that some cannot function adequately in either of Canada's official languages, and that members are being pressured to make positive decisions.

Will the minister listen this time, dismantle the IRB and start over, or will he ignore Bauer like he ignored us and other Canadians and even his own employees?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter should be put in its proper context.

The government has not accepted the status quo with respect to the Immigration and Refugee Board. We have moved serious reforms both legislatively as well as administratively. Last week the chairman of the IRB responded very comprehensively and very effectively to the Hathaway report.

No one is saying that institution or any institution of government is perfect. Equally so, we should not jump to the opposite extreme and say that everything the IRB does is wrong and every