

sions with any provincial government that would allow you to integrate the two taxes?

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put the question, not through the minister but through the Chair, and I am sure he would like to do that. The question is there and the hon. member will have a supplementary.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I did not know whether I would get this question because of the lovers' quarrel between the Liberals and the NDP.

The answer to the hon. member is that we are having discussions, as I have indicated, on ways that we can minimize or eliminate some of the compliance problems, some of the complexities of having both the federal and provincial taxes in place. As far as any discussions on total integration of the national sales tax, I think that is quite premature.

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister specifically whether he has the support of any provincial government at this point for the GST.

I would now like to ask my supplementary. You did not answer that part.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member certainly has questions, but I would ask the hon. member not to refer directly to the minister.

Mr. Barrett: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would you be kind enough to direct the minister to my question? If he is hard of hearing I know your assistance would be welcome.

I ask the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, whether or not he had the support of one single provincial government. He did not answer that. Second, through you Mr. Speaker, would you ask the minister kindly, through you back to me, whether or not he, the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, is prepared to forward the correspondence that he has received on this from any provincial government and table it in this House through the Chair?

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. I just want to say to the hon. member that that, of course, was a superbly appropriate procedurally put question.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, through you, I will respond to the two questions of the hon. member. To the first, officially we have not had any provincial government which says it supports the tax. They have indicated that they see some problems with it.

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We have addressed a number of those problems in the course of the December 19 decisions that I put before the House at that time. Most particularly they were concerned about the economic impact and therefore, through that, the impact on their fiscal positions. I think that bringing the rate down from 9 per cent to 7 per cent has gone a long way to address those concerns, but I would imagine that they are there to an extent already.

• (1750)

The hon. member has asked whether or not I would be prepared to table all correspondence that provincial ministers have with me. I think that that would be inappropriate. Provincial ministers and the federal minister have a good working relationship where we talk frankly and openly with each other. Some of these positions are put to the Minister of Finance and I respond to them in an open and frank way. If I were in the position of having to table all correspondence, I think that frankness and openness would break down.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to ask the minister to comment on some of the myths that were raised this afternoon by the leaders of the opposition. I do not think they were trying to be helpful to the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. That is pretty close to saying something that might cause a motion later on. I am sure the hon. member would not want to impute the motives of other hon. members. Would the hon. member put his question please.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance to answer some of the questions that real Canadians have been asking who really want to know about the GST, the kind of questions that I was asked in my constituency this weekend.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Manley: The ones that agree with you?

Mr. Gauthier: What are you talking about? I'm a real Canadian.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, if I could ask questions to benefit the people of Canada rather than for whatever reasons these people have asked questions today. One, what about the complexity for small business and the expense to administer? Two, will the GST, as the NDP leader claims, make life more difficult for the poor or for senior citizens? Finally, through you Mr. Speaker, a question that I could not answer for my constituents this