

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. I believe that I have responded to that question on the part of the Government. I have said very clearly that there is a process under way. When the recommendations are in from the consultation going on right now—

Mrs. Pépin: There was a promise.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I think that the Hon. Member should give me the courtesy of listening to my answer. I listened very carefully to her question.

Ms. Copps: The Prime Minister made a promise.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The process is under way right now. We are going to be able to make those decisions and provide funding within the context of the fiscal framework when those recommendations come forward.

Mrs. Pépin: The Prime Minister said there would be money in the Budget.

CHILD CARE FUNDING

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is also on the subject of lack of any support for child care and families in the Budget. Canadian families with young children do not need a breathing-space kind of Budget. What they need is assistance right now. We have had this confirmed over and over again. We have a crisis.

Can the Minister of Finance tell us why the Government is stalling on child care promises? We have it documented that a promise was made by the Prime Minister of substantial support. Is the Government stalling to wait for the provinces because the Government has a cop-out? Is that what the Government is trying to do? The Government wants to cop-out on this altogether. Why aren't you—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Minister has heard the question and can deal with it in his answer.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Nobody is copping out, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister gave a very clear commitment from the Government of Canada, in Vancouver.

Mr. Benjamin: He is hiding.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): He is not hiding. None of us is hiding. Maybe you should hide behind your ignorance.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure that if there is ignorance here, the Hon. Minister would wish to enlighten us all. The Hon. Minister.

Oral Questions

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, the Ministers of Health, the Ministers of Social Services along with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women very clearly—

Mr. Garneau: The Minister of Finance?

Mr. Epp (Provencher): The Minister of Finance is totally in agreement with it. The Prime Minister has given a direction. The Hon. Member is a member of a parliamentary committee and she doesn't have the report. She keeps talking here day after day. I ask that she give me the recommendations and then we will have the program complete so that by the end of the first half of this year the program can be pronounced by the Prime Minister at that time.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Of course, the Finance Minister agrees, Mr. Speaker, because he does not want to spend any money on child care. This Party has presented recommendations to the Finance Minister—

● (1500)

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member to put the question. This has been a very active Question Period and we are starting to run out of time. I am sure the Hon. Member can put her question directly.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance received the letter outlining our position on emergency funds for child care, and he did, why will he not take a leadership role and provide funds now? Will he reconsider at all?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is putting forward a plan which was only accepted or put forward by Manitoba. None of the other provinces wanted to go that route. I wish the Hon. Member would start to understand that approximately 8 per cent of Canadians accept that route. Surely we must have an option and surely we must have different plans for different Canadian families. I wish the Hon. Member would move away from her approach which is that only she knows while the rest of us do not know anything about families and the needs of children.

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THE BUDGET

GASOLINE TAX INCREASE

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Government has been trying to decide how to finance assistance to the energy sector, whether it be through tax increases, the Consolidated Revenue Fund or perhaps depletion allowances. It has come down to the one-cent-per-litre increase on gasoline taxes and the equalling of the taxes on