

Oral Questions

and let them have their say on future defence policy, before his departmental review is finalized?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, through the committee that the hon. member serves on, there is opportunity for the Canadian public to express its views and concern on the security of its own nation.

However if a suggestion were made that the security of Canada would be emphasized by a Gallup poll and directed that way, I suggest to the hon. member that that is not adequate security for any country.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Let me build on the minister's answer, Mr. Speaker, ask him now, specifically, if he would be prepared to go so far as to make a reference to the standing committee of the House of Commons to engage it in the review of defence policy and to allow Parliament, which speaks for all Canadians, to participate in his review of defence policy. Would he go that far as to make a reference to the standing committee?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member being a long serving member of the House knows that if the standing committee wishes to take this action it would take it on its own initiative. I would fully support that action taken by the standing committee if that were its wish.

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TAXATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Senior citizens in my riding who are now filling in their 1989 income tax returns are asking me why they are required to pay the clawback on their old age security when there is no law requiring them to do so.

Can the minister explain why any senior should pay a tax that is not the law of this land?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this legislation has passed the House of Commons. It is in the Senate now.

The effective date of the taxback to which the hon. member refers is the last fiscal year. If someone does not

want to pay it right now, it is perfectly within their right not to pay it, but once the law is passed it will be effective for last year and they will have to pay it at that time.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the minister's answer. I challenge him to rise in his place and give any authority for a tax that has not been passed by all parts of this Parliament.

Since seniors are not required to pay it, will he stand and assure them that they are at liberty to fill in their tax this year without paying the clawback on their income tax, and that there will be no penalty or interest added if and when it is passed?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe I responded to that part of his question in my first answer.

The practice that is affecting this particular aspect of the Income Tax Act is something the country has been following for many, many years now. Taxes become effective on certain days as long as there is a Ways and Means motion that initiates the legislative process. That Ways and Means motion was put in place last April, and it is on that basis that the tax is liable to be paid.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns the plight of the refusnik family, Leonid and Natalia Stonov.

As the minister knows, they first applied to leave the Soviet Union in 1979. They were last turned down in 1988 and told not to reapply for four more years.

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs intervene in this case?

I met the wife, Natalia, yesterday in Toronto. She is in Canada on a visitor's visa. We phoned Leonid in Moscow and I promised him that the government would try to intervene to get special cases like his rectified just as soon as possible so that they can start a new life in Israel.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.