

Oral Questions

I should point out to her that a course in sexism is being presented this summer.

She will also know that this government has far exceeded the numbers of the previous Liberal administration in the appointments of women to the bench.

She will know that there are now three women sitting on the bench of the Supreme Court of Canada.

We are making every effort to tackle this problem. If my hon. friend has any suggestions I would welcome them.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, it sounds good and the government likes to talk numbers, but let us talk percentages.

Given that only 9 per cent of federally appointed judges in this country are women, can the minister give a commitment that this government will significantly increase the numbers of women judges within its purview and do it soon?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, since my hon. friend brought up percentages, I would suggest to her that 16 of the 66 judges elevated to higher office, or 24 per cent of the elevations made by this government, were women.

Also, 16.7 per cent of the total appointments have been women. My hon. friend will know but will not admit it on the floor of the House that that is much better than the previous Liberal administration.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

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

Canadians outside of Ottawa are incensed that budget documents will not be made available to them as traditionally done on budget day, but will only be made available in Ottawa.

Does the Minister understand that individuals and small corporations will be at a disadvantage because they will not be able to act with the same speed as large corporations which have a presence in Ottawa? Does the Minister realize that this decision is unfair and places

Canadians not residing in Ottawa at an economic disadvantage?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern that is expressed by my hon. friend. We have revised the processes for the distribution of documents this year. I am sure he is aware that at the opening of business the next day people across the country will have the budget documents and will be able to work from those in a very short period of time after the budget is brought before the House.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has simply confirmed that people across Canada will not have the same opportunity as those residing here.

Can he explain this to the House? The budget leak took place in Ottawa—not in Montreal or Vancouver. Why is he punishing the people in Canada rather than those responsible in Ottawa?

Mr. Boudria: Ottawa is in Canada.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of punishing anybody. What we are doing here is having a slight change of the processes by which we distribute budget documents.

There will also be available the various services to which most of the law firms and accounting firms are subscribers. That is where most of the businesses get their information from.

In that way they will be able to get the same amount of information just as quickly as they were able to before. It is just that the documents themselves will be a few hours later.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The minister has insisted that the current MST content for new housing is 4.5 per cent of the cost of a house, while the housing industry has insisted that the figure is closer to 3.7 per cent.

The Minister maintains that the GST will have little or no impact on housing prices, but industry figures show that house prices will increase by 2 per cent.