

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am going to answer this question one more time, and that's it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The answer to the question is—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): That is a contempt of Parliament.

Mr. Broadbent: Answer the question.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If Hon. Members wish to listen to the answer, the answer to the question is that the Hon. Member is drawing conclusions based upon things which were put before the Estey Commission last week. They are the conclusions which he is drawing from it. The whole purpose of the Estey Commission is for Mr. Justice Estey to draw these conclusions, so that he can present a report to the House and to the people of Canada which asserts his judgment of the various points of view that entered into the decisions which were taken surrounding the demise of those two banks.

Mr. Nystrom: What did you know?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Until Mr. Justice Estey brings forward his report, I am not going to make any further comments.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIME MINISTER'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the Government is about to make its case for shutting down the House, because it does not intend to answer the most important questions before the nation.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Tobin: I welcome the Prime Minister back from the Commonwealth meeting. I hope he has learned a lesson from the British Prime Minister. I hope he is prepared to move a little out of his seat and answer some questions.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Tobin: I want to ask him the question which was asked by the Opposition House Leader that he deliberately chose not to answer. What information did the Prime Minister have which caused him to overrule the Minister he selected and appointed to oversee the entire matter, to overrule her decision and her judgment that this—

Mr. Speaker: I am in some difficulty. The House knows that our practices have been to allow Members to put the questions they wish to put. However, the House also knows that we have

a tradition of not simply repeating, repeating, and repeating the same question. May I, therefore, ask the Hon. Member to come immediately to a question which perhaps has not been asked and already answered?

Mr. Tobin: Did the Prime Minister have access to any information which was not available to other Members of his Cabinet who were part of the decision to allow the bail-out package to go ahead? Did he have any information which was not available to other Ministers?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should realize that this is a government decision. It is a decision taken by the Government at that time. The basis for the decision is not subject to a wide-ranging debate in the House of Commons as to who knew what and who did what during that time.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Why not?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Because the—

Mr. Rossi: It looks fishy.

Mr. Andre: Have you heard of responsible Government and responsible Ministers?

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): What are you afraid of?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If Hon. Members would let me complete my answer, I will give them an answer. This is a collective decision taken by the Government. What individual Ministers felt and what individual Ministers brought forward what information to the decision are subject to Cabinet confidences. The result is a collective decision; the result is a Government decision.

MINISTER'S MARCH STATEMENT

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, that is an admission that there were differences among the Cabinet.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: I have a supplementary question. Can the Minister of Finance tell us why, on March 29, the Minister of State for Finance told the House that \$255 million was sufficient, when we know that she knew on the twenty-fourth that the package was flawed by \$116 million? How could she make that statement and mislead the House?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that what the Hon. Member has added to that question is totally wrong. The decision was taken by the Government based on the information which we had at that time. The information which we had was sufficient for us to make the judgment—

Mr. Tobin: What information did you have?