

Oral Questions

Mr. Pagtakhan Indeed, her visit is an historic one. Truly concerned for the well-being of the Filipino people, Her Excellency brings their aspirations to all Canadians.

There is hardly a need to remind Canadians about the seriousness of her purpose. The Philippines needs Canada for investment and trade as the Philippines reconstructs itself from the economic ruin caused by past authoritarian rule. In turn, Canada benefits from such economic partnership.

I urge the Prime Minister to reaffirm Canada's commitment to assist the Philippines not only through international aid programs, but also through enhanced trade and investment, and thereby assist her in cementing the pillars of democracy and human dignity in the Philippines, in improving the living conditions of the poorest of the Filipino people, and in bringing peace to them.

I invite my colleagues to join me in welcoming President Corazon Aquino to Canada.

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MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, as of today, Monday, November 6, the Hon. Michael Wilson has served as Minister of Finance for 61 months and 20 days.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: This makes Michael Wilson the longest serving Minister of Finance in over 35 years. He has now surpassed the time in office of Donald Fleming, who served as Minister of Finance in the Diefenbaker government for 61 months and 18 days. buffs, it is a reflection of his outstanding abilities.

Canadians know that while Michael Wilson is the Minister of Finance, the effort to balance the books will be unrelenting. The competence, consistency and tenacity of the Minister of Finance, not just over a short time but over the long haul, deserves our respect. Let's give him a standing ovation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the fact that Michael Wilson has served as

long as he has as finance minister means only one thing, that the government does not care at all what the people of Canada think.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has done for the finances of this country what the Boston Strangler did for Avon ladies.

Today I received a petition, signed by 228 citizens of my constituency, protesting the government's introduction of the GST, the gouge and squeeze tax to the people of my riding. It is most interesting to note that this particular petition was organized by none other than the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, an old ally of this government.

Recently Sydney, Nova Scotia, ranked one hundred and seventeenth levels in a survey done by Statistics Canada into the income of urban areas. With an average income of under \$17,000 a year, the people of my riding are in no position to withstand the savage attack on their spending power which will result with the introduction of this tax. The government has taken away the trains, it has taken away the regional development assistance, it has wrecked the fishing industry. Will the government please, at least, relent and do away with this terrible tax.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, one of the most precious traditions of our Canadian democracy is that the RCMP has the independent responsibility to decide whether and when to lay charges, especially in cases of political interest. It appears from sworn evidence, given by an RCMP officer this morning in a criminal trial, that this tradition has been violated. In the budget leak affair on May 30, I asked the Solicitor General for an assurance that the—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. I will hear the question, I do not want any more preamble. I will hear the question and then I am going to decide whether we can proceed with it. I would ask the hon. member's co-operation.