

available to the Canadian people, the hon. gentleman is opposed because he knows full well that it is in the national interest and that Canadians will approve it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Riis: Call an election if you believe it. You are afraid of the people of Canada.

Mr. Mulroney: What could be more democratic than to have the House of Commons invite one of its committees to visit with Canadians across the country to discuss an important issue?

Mr. Riis: An election would be better.

Mr. Mulroney: It seems to me that this is entirely consistent with the idea of parliamentary committees doing their jobs. We have done nothing. We have placed no limitations on the right of the committee to govern itself, to make its own value judgments. Surely, I would expect my hon. friend to join with us in helping that committee fulfil what is clearly a very important national function. If there has been activity in the field in Ontario, and, perhaps, Manitoba and elsewhere, surely the national Parliament will want to do no less on behalf of allowing all Canadians to be heard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT OF HEARINGS UNTIL
PRODUCTION OF FINAL DOCUMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the best way to have all Canadians to hear and to understand what is involved is for the Prime Minister to have the courage to call a general election now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I do not readily expect that. Since it is important for the people of Canada actually to be able to look at the final wording, and it is important whether we are talking about the resource sector, the service sector, the agriculture sector—it is important for all these people to be able actually to see the final wording—would the Prime Minister not agree that either a new deadline should be negotiated right away with the United States, or that he should scrap these phoney hearings that will not have a final document to look at?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be generally acknowledged that ordinary Canadians who do not have the easy access to the media that some other people do have, legitimately, Members of Parliament, but also, for example, Mr. Bob White, ordinary Canadians, small businessmen—

Mr. Riis: Are you afraid of an election, Brian?

Mr. Mulroney: —should have a chance to come before a parliamentary committee to express their point of view. If they

are in favour of freed trade, then they can say so. If they are against tree trade, then they can say so as well.

My hon. friend from British Columbia is calling for an election. We will call an election just as soon as members of his Party get themselves a new Quebec lieutenant.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

SALE OF BANK OF BRITISH COLUMBIA—PAYMENT OF \$200 MILLION BY CANADA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It concerns a statement—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Trinity has the floor. As Hon. Members who have been here for some years will know, she is one of the Members who ask the clearest, most concise and most direct questions in this place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I am sure Hon. Members would want to extend the proper courtesies to hear her. The Hon. Member for Trinity.

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): My question is for the Minister of Finance and it concerns a statement in the Auditor General's report which I quote:

The transaction that resulted in the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation paying \$200 million to facilitate the sale of the Bank of British Columbia was structured in a way that could be regarded as an attempt to avoid income taxes.

Since the Deputy Minister of Finance is a member of the Board of Directors of that Crown corporation, will the Minister tell the House if he approved that particular method of transferring of funds?

Mr. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for asking the question very precisely because the Auditor General used the words "could be" interpreted. This particular transaction was a complicated one, structured in such a way that no one, if they had asked, would have been able to figure out the tax implications of the transaction. Those questions were not asked and not considered because the problem was quite different.

We were trying to save a bank in British Columbia. The \$200 million that the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation advanced to the parent company, the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, was to it and not to its Canadian branch. It was made to it in order to allow it to keep the bank running, to keep the doors open, to keep the depositors' money, and to guarantee that bank long into the future. The CDIC felt that was a