

*Oral Questions*

As for Parliament, it certainly did not condone this error, Mr. Speaker. Parliament didn't even consider the OAS membership.

[*English*]

In the same speech the Prime Minister told Latin Americans how concerned he was that 40 million Latin Americans lived in abysmal poverty. He told them that he was concerned that half the adults in Latin America do not have a full-time job and how concerned he was about the increasing infant mortality rate.

If the Prime Minister is so concerned about these issues and about world poverty, why did he cut humanitarian food aid by \$46 million this year? Why has he cut the amount of food that Canada gives to the poorest of the poor in this world?

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend is quoting from someone else's speech. I never gave the speech or the extracts that my hon. friend has just quoted.

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** That's right. You never say those things.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend, unless I misunderstood him, has suggested that I issued that particular statement which I did not. It does not mean that I disagree with some of the things that my right hon. friend says, but I did not make those remarks.

He also says that this matter was never considered by the House. My information is that Canada's membership in the OAS was considered very actively and thoroughly by a committee of this House in 1982.

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Seven years ago.

**Mr. Mulroney:** It is true, Mr. Speaker, that seven years is a long time in politics. The Liberals were in a majority. They made a recommendation, as I understand it, that Canada should join the OAS. Paul Martin, Sr., recommended it 35 years ago, and this government has done it.

**PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Today at noon thousands of Canadians came to Parliament Hill and called on the government to drop the goods and services tax.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member has the floor.

**Mr. Harb:** Mr. Speaker, obviously my colleagues can hear whatever they like to hear. Today at noon thousands of Canadians came to Parliament Hill and called on the Government to drop the goods and services tax. What more do Canadians have to do to make this government listen and drop this unfair and unholy tax?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I do not like to contradict my hon. friend's numbers, but I was advised by people that the media had done a count, which was somewhere around 300, or possibly 350.

The right hon. Leader of the Opposition made some comments. I think we should go back to figure out how he counted back in the time when he was the Minister of Finance. Government spending was increasing at a rate of 29 per cent per annum in his last year as Minister of Finance. When government spending is increasing at that rate, that is the sort of thing that leads to high levels of taxes.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Did you bring down a surplus?

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** The hon. member talks again about his surplus, the surplus that he had in his first year as Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Two in a row.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** I think the right hon. gentleman is talking about the surpluses that he inherited and then we went straight down hill from there as a country as he led us into deficit after deficit.

**Mr. Harb:** Mr. Speaker, if anything, it is the smugness of this government that is ignoring millions of Canadians across the country from coast to coast. Eighty per cent of Canadians are opposed to this goods and services tax.