

*Oral Questions*

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there has never been, to my knowledge, any political pressure put on the environmental assessment process.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the reply given by the Minister of Finance who mentioned the importance of the GST in reducing the federal deficit. I would like to direct the following question to the Minister of Finance, namely, whether today, the Minister is prepared to acknowledge that the GST is going to be an endless source of revenue for the government, which is why he wants the passage of this bill.

[*English*]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I will say that the GST will make us more competitive as a nation. It improve the capacity of our economy to create jobs. That will generate revenues. That will help us deal with the deficit more effectively.

But the import of my response earlier to his colleague was that it is not just the GST that is being held up in the House. It is the unemployment insurance reform, it is the large corporations tax, and it is the expenditure reduction bill, Bill C-69—all of which are designed to get the deficit down.

I say to my hon. friend, he would have more credibility if he would pick up the phone, call the people in the Senate and say: "Look, we in the Liberal Party are concerned about the deficit because, if we can get the deficit under control better, then we can have lower interest rates and we want to get interest rates under control."

I can see by the way my colleague opposite in the Liberal Party is nodding his head is that he agrees with that approach. I would encourage him to get up, go down the hall, speak to Mr. MacEachen, and provide some leadership from the other side to get this legislation moving, allow us to get on with the job of getting the deficit down, and allow us to get on with the job of getting interest rates down.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

• (1440)

**Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister keeps this up, there is certainly no guarantee he is going to get to heaven.

If the Minister of Finance is interested in what is happening and who is picking up phones, he might be interested in speaking with the Prime Minister when he returns from New Brunswick. The Prime Minister will tell him what he is hearing on the phones in New Brunswick today.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Young (Acadie—Bathurst):** Mr. Speaker, today the Governor of the Bank of Canada said he was going to continue with his monetary policy and today interest rates are up, even though it is marginally. Did the Minister of Finance, in his meeting with the Governor of the Bank of Canada today, approve the increase in interest rates?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, that is kind of a silly question. The hon. members knows that I cannot disclose what has been discussed by myself with the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Those are confidential meetings and he understands that.

We have to realize today that there has been a significant drop in the value of the Canadian dollar over the past three or four days and one of the automatic, normal market reactions is to see some increase in interest rates. That is what we saw in the Treasury Bill tendered today.

I say to my friend, he is expressing a good deal of concern for the economic policy and the economic direction of the country. If he is sincerely concerned about this, where are the alternative policies? Where are the alternatives to how best we should handle these economic issues? We are dealing with these issues as a responsible government. I am not hearing anything from the opposition parties as to what their alternatives are and how they are going to deal with this. If you do not have alternatives, stay in the bleachers. You don't have any role down here on the playing-field.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.