

Oral Questions

My understanding of the position taken by many members of the Liberal caucus, however, has been that they have been opposed in the past to private day care and have argued in favour strictly of public day care.

Our position in the government is to encourage child care in Canada. That is why we are committing almost \$1 billion this year to do precisely that.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, I understand the minister's abrasiveness which attempts to conceal his embarrassment at his government's plan to save day care legislation until the next election.

Because of this government's day care deception of 1988, more and more working mothers are unable to find space in non-profit day care and are forced to rely on private centres. If the GST passes these families will pay as much as \$300 more per child next year.

Will the minister inform the House as to whether his ministry will make any effort to stop the GST from smothering much needed day care, or is the national Revenue the only ministry interested in targeting day care?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member will forgive me for introducing facts on the floor of the House of Commons.

However, the position taken by this government from the outset has been that we want to see a national day care program in place. If it were not for the Liberal senators, we would have a national day care program in place today.

I would ask the hon. member whether she speaks for the Liberal Party of Canada in arguing in favour of private child care over publicly financed child care. I would point out to the hon. member that families earning less than \$30,000 a year will be ahead of the game as a result of the GST tax credit. She should be supporting it

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[Translation]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, despite a chorus of protests, the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board are still refusing to

grant an exemption from the GST on books, which will sound the death knell of the publishing industry. The Minister of Communications said, and I quote: "Put your questions to the Minister of Finance. As far as I am concerned, the studies I paid for are being used to attack the GST".

My question to the Prime Minister is as follows: Does he agree with his Minister of Communications or with the President of the Treasury Board? Which one?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will understand that the Minister of Communications, the Minister of Finance and myself have an abiding interest in the growth of the publishing industry in this country. The Liberals, unfortunately, have started to believe what they say about the GST. They describe the GST as a monster, and they are now shooting at the monster. The GST is a tax that exists in many countries. It is a direct and visible tax, applied to a very broad base so that choices will not depend on the tax. This tax also helps to improve the state of the economy, so that more people will be able to buy books after the GST is introduced than was the case before.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): You know perfectly well you are killing one of Quebec's cultural industries.

[English]

These ministers and this government in particular are killing the book industry in Quebec and across this country. It is a very serious matter. This is not a laughing matter. Reading is an opening into the world, and you are cutting back the population's access to it—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could put her question.

Mrs. Finestone: Will any one of these ministers come clean with the Canadian public, come clean with the printing industry and recognize that you are killing them with this GST tax?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept that for a minute, but let me also say to my hon. friend that education is not being taxed and libraries are not being taxed.

My colleague, the Minister of Communications, has a program that will be helping Canadian book publishers, but I think what this does—