

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who has obviously been hearing like the rest of us about a lot of taxpayers who are fed up with hitting the wall. Some taxpayers have not hit the wall. Some taxpayers have never even seen the wall and others have jumped over the wall.

Over the last few days the minister has talked about tax loopholes. I am pleased to hear him actually using that term as part of his vocabulary these days.

Will the minister as part of this theme seriously address the fact that capital gains in Canada are not taxed as other income as we find in the United States? People who inherit vast amounts of money do not pay tax. Would he consider the mother or father of all tax loopholes, the family trust, and remove that tax option in his budget?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House on numerous occasions I will not comment on specific suggestions. When bringing down the budget I will obviously give an answer to the member's question. In the meantime I will take it as representation.

• (1450)

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the theme of fairness that the minister has commented on so much recently, would he ensure in whatever provisions he brings down in his budget that urban Canadians and rural and small town Canadians take an equal hit?

There is a lot of concern out there right now, particularly around the whole matter of transportation policy and so on, that rural and small town Canadians will be adversely affected by the budget much more than urban Canadians.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that a great deal of effort has gone into and is going into making sure that the budget is fair.

The comments of the hon. member are well taken. Between urban Canadians and rural Canadians, in fact between Canadians in each region of the country the budget must be fair.

If we are to face up to the tremendous problem of the debt and the deficit, it is clear the budget will only be accepted if Canadians feel that everybody is bearing their fair share of the burden. I can assure the hon. member that is our intention.

[*Translation*]

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CANADIAN FLAG

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of heritage. Canada is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the flag today, at a cost of a million dollars in this era of budget cuts, while the 25th anniversary was only marked by a simple ceremony on Parliament Hill.

How can the minister explain why the government will invest over one million dollars this year, half of it in Quebec the year the referendum will be held, when a simple ceremony sufficed for the 25th anniversary?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have several things to say in reply. The first is that in the year of the 25th anniversary, the government in power was perhaps not interested in Canada's symbol, was perhaps not as interested in the Canadian flag as we are.

The figures you gave were wrong. Only 25 per cent, not 50, of the budget for the event will be spent in Quebec. I was asked how many flags there were, and I can say that approximately 30 per cent of them are for Quebec. You were misinformed, Madam.

The Speaker: I would like to remind the hon. minister to always address the Chair.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, instead of clumsily justifying himself, why does the minister not just admit that we have a clear case here of a vast federal propaganda campaign gearing up in Quebec during the year of the referendum?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues may suppose that I am using the 30th anniversary of the flag to detract attention from a referendum that has not even been called yet. I would say that some people have a very narrow mind on these issues, so narrow that their ears are stuck together from the inside. Now I understand why they need to separate to broaden their vision and their minds.

The Speaker: Sometimes, these exchanges give me such a headache. Let us move on.

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[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Many Canadians feel that the Achilles' heel of the gun legislation is the registration of long guns, not of handguns nor the other aspects of the bill but the registration of .22s and shotguns.