

*Oral Questions*

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### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The government has said that workers must not negotiate wage increases in anticipation of an inflationary GST. On the other hand, the Canadian Labour Congress does not trust the assurances of the Minister of Finance that his tax will not hurt ordinary Canadians. Workers are determined to offset damage caused by such a regressive tax.

Why is this government continually threatening workers for trying to seek their necessary protection?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, we are not threatening anybody, we are just stating what we believe are the basic facts.

Let me quote from some fairly well-known people. The Economic Council of Canada said: "The reality of the world marketplace will force business people to pass through the great bulk of the tax." The Canadian Construction Association said: "The selling price for all kinds of construction in our analysis is found to be lower under the GST than under the current tax system." John Crispo says: "Very few manufacturers of significance are going to be able to pocket the reduction in the MST. Competition is going to force them to pass it on to us."

We do not believe the concerns that have been expressed by some people in the labour movement and in other places will be found in actual reality as we move into the world of GST. We think it would be wrong and very unhealthy for the economy for people to go after excessive wage demands in anticipation of the GST, which will not produce an increase in the cost of living.

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The government's policies that we have seen over the last number of years have been clearly anti-labour. The legislative policies have battered Canadians for the past six years.

With such a track record, how can the workers believe this minister when he promises them that they will not suffer from the GST? Can he make that promise here today?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member saying that the policies of this government are anti-labour.

What could be more pro-labour than the 1.6 million jobs that have been created since 1984? If the hon. member is looking for more specific policies, all he has to do is look at the support we have provided to the labour venture capital funds that have been requested by labour and to which this government has responded positively.

These are the things that labour can look to from this government as ways in which we are supporting the growth of labour in this country.

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### COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

**Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State, but in his absence I will direct it to the Minister of Justice.

The Court Challenges Program provides legal and funding assistance to disadvantaged groups or individuals to clarify charter equality and language rights. Last week, the Secretary of State announced an extension of this program for five years, but failed to announce the agency that would be administering the program.

Can the minister rectify the neglect today and inform us to whom the court challenges staff is now responsible, thus allowing the program to continue efficiently?

**Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I believe my colleague, the Secretary of State is reviewing the administration of the Court Challenges Program and will make an announcement when he has made a decision.

**Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland):** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for the program to carry on efficiently in the absence of an agency. Citing the current economic situation, the Secretary of State refused to consider important recommendations to the Court Challenges Program from the Human Rights Committee. Equality rights, language rights, women's rights, native rights, among others, are denied *de facto* justice if