

Oral Questions

The hon. member is obviously saying that he does not understand what exercises are for. There is an important necessity that the hon. member is not recognizing. Forces around the world—Canadian forces, also—have to practise and exercise in order to do their job.

One really only has one opportunity. If one is not capable of fulfilling one's responsibility by exercising and being capable, then one is not able to protect the ships. If the ships are not able to exercise and fulfil their responsibility, they are not able to protect the hospital ships which happen to be there.

Canadian forces exercise daily. The squadrons exercise and the vessels exercise. I believe it is important so that the men and women who serve are able to do the job that they are assigned by the Government of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the minister and the government clearly failed to grasp the vital necessity of keeping Canadian involvement within the limits of the UN mandate, but let me turn to another point, Mr. Speaker, in my supplementary question.

In January, External Affairs asked CSIS to investigate whether or not Canadians or Canadian companies had assisted Iraq in developing long-range missiles, which today are aimed at our contingent in the gulf.

In view of the public interest in this issue, will the government make this complete CSIS report public? Can the government assure the House that no Canadian government agency in any way, direct or indirect, has assisted Canadians or Canadian companies in the development of Iraqi missiles?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the specific question about CSIS, my hon. colleague knows that it is government policy neither to deny or to admit any allegations with respect to CSIS's specific operations.

[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance but, in his absence, to the Acting Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Quebec Minister of Finance stated that he had asked his federal counterpart to exempt books from the GST. Does the minister intend to listen and act accordingly, or will he once again turn a deaf ear?

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance made it very clear that the GST would be implemented as is. I believe the Senate votes on its last amendment tomorrow and, hopefully, it will come to its senses and take the final vote on the goods and services tax and get on with it.

The Minister of Finance made a commitment that he would review certain aspects of the goods and services tax once it is implemented and operating, but to make exceptions now would be very foolish. It must be implemented and we must get on with the timetable. I would encourage the hon. member to talk to her friends in the Senate to encourage them to take the final vote on the goods and services tax.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister well knows that this is not going to be passed in a hurry.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the same minister. Since Quebec would have to follow Ottawa's lead in this matter, books would be taxed twice. If the minister is reluctant to accept the logic of this proposal and decides to apply the tax across the board, could he give us a guarantee in this House today that he will grant tax credits to prevent the disastrous impact his policy would otherwise have on Quebec's written culture?

[*English*]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I want to caution