

*Oral Questions*

of the settlement which has been achieved with most other native communities in Canada.

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• (1440)

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for small businesses. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business released a study yesterday showing that small businesses along our borders from coast to coast are being adversely affected by our tax system. The threat of the GST is going to further complicate this. What does the minister responsible for small businesses say about those tens of thousands of small businesses that are being destroyed by this government's tax policy?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind all of those border communities that the federal government is putting in place, under the GST, a rebate system for everything that visitors from the United States and other countries buy and take home. They get a complete rebate. We are making it very easy for them to apply for it through the duty-free shops. That is the best possible answer for our retailers.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the minister heard my question. The point is that a baby suit or a baby jacket is the same in Buffalo as it is in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. There is only one thing which is different; it is the price. What ideas does he have to put forward to keep those purchases in Canada?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend and congratulate him on his appointment as critic for small business and entrepreneurship. I am glad that he is trying to be creative, especially on this important issue. What is happening here, though, is that the manufacturers' sales tax is being removed for the first time in 65 years. The manufacturers' sales tax will lower the cost of running every single business in Canada, plus foreign tourists will be getting the rebate.

More important, the CFIB made the point yesterday that it feels the level of taxation is too heavy across Canada; municipal, provincial and federal. It believes that the municipal role is even higher than the federal role. We believe in working with the border communi-

ties, as we have through our border community task force, to find ways to better market our products, to better position our products, and to help the small business community of Canada.

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**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago it was a tough-talking government that proclaimed its intention to clear the refugee backlog with a new refugee system. Instead, what it has created is a monster that tortures claimants and their families with long delays, will eat hundreds of millions of taxpayers dollars and probably give birth to a backlog of its very own.

What is the Prime Minister doing about what has been so aptly described as his Minister of Immigration's costly flop of a program?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, we have set up a mechanism which will enable us to catch up with the backlog. As our Minister of Immigration so aptly put it a few days ago, we are well within the time limit. We have taken a humanitarian approach. We review each case on its own merits and we certainly intend to go on working diligently and showing respect for applicants who need our help.

[*English*]

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, the facts and the figures prove the minister wrong; they prove the Minister of Immigration wrong. In human terms, this government has failed. What we are talking about is people who want a better life for themselves and their families. I want to ask the Prime Minister again: how is he going to have his Minister of Immigration put a stop to her dehumanizing policies and simplify the criteria to clear the backlog?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite ought to read the newspapers now and then. Appearing before the parliamentary committee, Chairman Gordon Fairweather himself spoke highly of the quality of the system set up by the Canadian government and suggested that the international community might take it as an example. We