

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Do you have to think about it, Michael?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** He is a Member of the New Democratic Party. Mr. Speaker, Marc Lalonde put in a sales tax increase. I believe it was Allan MacEachen who put in the petroleum compensation charge, and the unemployment insurance premiums have been around for a long, long time.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## THE BUDGET

## REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL

**Mr. Langdon:** Mr. Speaker, clearly it might have been R2D2 who reached out beyond the grave here.

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor):** I have a serious question to ask the Minister. In view of the attacks on every assumption on which the Budget was based, is the Minister now prepared to withdraw this Budget and start all over again?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I guess the Hon. Member is out in that other world with Darth Vader.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear hear!

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** The simple answer—

**An Hon. Member:** He's spaced out.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Yes, he is spaced out. The simple answer is that I stand by the bottom line of those projections. The 9.5 per cent interest rate will, I think, prove to be quite realistic. The bottom line on the oil price assumptions, as I have said I think seven times already, is that as the oil price goes down there are two offsetting—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I think the Minister has had enough time to answer that.

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[Translation]

## WOMEN

## REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF PROGRAM CONCERNING PROMOTION OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

Last week's Budget provided for cuts in departmental spending. Mr. Speaker, I wish the Minister would give us the assurance that the Women's Program in the Department of the Secretary of State will not be abolished, as some people fear will be the case.

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, at the present time we are analyzing the Budget cuts and when this has been done, we will be able to inform the House and Canadians how my Department's budgets have been able to respond to these cuts.

## REDUCTION OF BUDGET FOR PROMOTION OF WOMEN PROGRAM—GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS

**Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister has cut at least twelve per cent from the Women's Program for 1986-87, allowing for inflation.

Could the Minister inform the House how far he is prepared to go? How much is he prepared to concede to the Minister of Finance, to reduce the budget for the Women's Program even further?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I can give the Hon. Member no assurance other than the fact that usually I am not the one who concedes anything to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance makes the concessions.

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[English]

## FINANCE

## EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR—EFFECT ON FOOD PRICES

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Low and middle-income families are paying very dearly for the lack of confidence in the Government's economic policies. Is it fair that an average family will pay an extra \$100 for food as a result of the falling dollar and this will be put on top of the extra tax burden as well as slashes to services for these same families?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a well know fact that, if the NDP policies had been followed by the Government, the falling dollar would have been dropping through the floor. That is why we have taken action in the Budget to steady the dollar.

I would say to the Hon. Member that low-income families are benefiting from the increase in the child tax credit, the acceleration of the payment of the child tax credit, the low-income refundable sales tax credit, and the \$100 million that we are redirecting to help those Canadians who are on welfare find work and become more accustomed to the workforce. These are things that are real benefits—