

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

TAX REFORM—DEFERRED TAXES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions about some promises the Government has been making for the past seven months. First, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. According to the latest figures from Statistics Canada, Canadian companies owe \$28 billion in deferred taxes. Could the Minister guarantee that these companies will not receive a retroactive reduction of these taxes as a result of his tax reform?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have said from time to time here in the House that Hon. Members should wait for the White Paper on tax reform to be tabled. I think I said all the questions the Hon. Member has asked will be answered.

[English]

MINISTER'S IMPENDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I heard what the Minister had to say. I hope that he will at least begin to clarify his approach. He talked about his approach in the past before the day of his White Paper.

Since corporations in Canada, according to the most recent figures, owe some \$28 billion in deferred taxes, and since any tax reform will not give retroactively a benefit to individual taxpayers, will the Minister guarantee the people of Canada that any general corporate tax reduction that he may announce on Thursday will not enable those companies to make any retroactive saving on the money that they now owe to the people of Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that the Hon. Member has said from time to time about which we can agree. There need to be a number of changes made to the corporate tax system, which is one of the objectives of tax reform.

As I stated in my previous answer, I think it is important for him to be a little bit more patient and to wait until the White Paper comes down on Thursday. It will deal with a number of these questions in a very full way.

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CHILD CARE

DELAY IN ANNOUNCING POLICY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the other aspect of my general question about promises for June, of the Prime Minister since the Minister of National Health and Welfare is not in the House.

The people of Canada, in particular those who were looking forward to the implementation of the child care promise made by the Prime Minister at Christmas and by his Minister of National Health in the House, that a national policy would be announced before the end of June were deeply disappointed to hear from the Minister on the weekend that this will not be coming until the fall. Will the Prime Minister tell the people of Canada why this solemn commitment, that the Minister described as being urgent a couple of months ago, is now being put off once again?

● (1430)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, the Government, as the Hon. Member knows, has made a very strong commitment to child care. There is no question that it is an urgent situation. The Prime Minister has said as much, as has the Minister of National Health and Welfare, as have I.

This was first declared an urgent problem in 1971—

Mr. Broadbent: Right!

Mrs. McDougall: —by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. What is important to point out is that we have spent two years making progress on this issue. We are working toward coming up with the best quality system possible.

That is the commitment of the Prime Minister and of the Minister of National Health and Welfare. And, believe me, under this Government the delay will not be 17 years.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

POSSIBILITY OF STRIKE—OPPORTUNITY FOR PRIME MINISTER TO ACT AS CONCILIATOR

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. We all know that negotiations between Canada Post and the unions are not going smoothly, which means that we may be faced with a strike as of midnight tonight. Thousands of Canadians may be deprived of a service they consider essential, and thousands of small businesses may be faced with problems that may lead to lay-offs and even the outright loss of jobs.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he realizes that he now has a golden opportunity to demonstrate that his much vaunted reputation as a conciliator is based on fact, and that he could take the kind of action that is needed and take it now—the kind of action that most of his Ministers have refused to take so far—and intervene directly in the negotiations between Canada Post and the unions to forestall a strike that nobody wants.