

their phone calls to the agencies referred to, they found that no one was really charged with monitoring the sales tax cut and no one seemed to know what they were doing.

Will the minister make a commitment to assign a single agency to monitor the 3 per cent cut so that consumers will get the \$1 billion, and not the corporations?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, that is difficult to understand. Before Christmas, I met with the entire executive of the Consumers Association of Canada and told them exactly what the government had in mind. That was the announcement by the Minister of Finance on budget night to the effect that until the end of the year the AIB, my department and CSIP would be involved in the monitoring process. I told them exactly what the role of my department would be; that is, with our many offices across the country, to keep a close watch on consumer products in the field to determine whether tax cuts were being passed on. Up until this time there have not been many complaints.

It is difficult to determine, especially with small products where the price is low—although we know that with automobiles it was passed on—with things such as appliances whether this is so. But the monitoring is continuing.

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FINANCE

CHANGES TO SMALL BUSINESS TAX RATE

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Finance? On December 13, in response to my questions regarding proposed changes to the small business tax rate, the minister said that he would be introducing a bill on the matter "within the next few days."

My question is simply this: why has the minister reneged on that promise, and when can we expect this bill to be tabled in order that, as his colleague, the hon. member for Labelle, stated earlier the confusion and uncertainty which the Minister has created can be somewhat resolved?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a Ways and Means motion which includes everything that is in the bill. That is what I meant when I referred to the introduction of the bill, so that it would be possible for me to receive comments from people who have an interest in it. Most of the people who have an interest have looked into it and we have received some letters from them. If some changes are to be proposed, they will be in the bill when I introduce it soon.

Mr. Jelinek: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Neither the minister's ways and means motion nor his press release on the matter, issued in December, assure the thousands and thousands of legitimate one-man operations, as well as independent insurance and real estate brokers, that they will be exempt from the proposed amendments.

Oral Questions

In order to clarify the obvious uncertainty and confusion within this widespread sector of our economy, can the minister today give these legitimate small business operations, including real estate brokers and insurance brokers, the assurance that they will continue to qualify for the preferential small business tax?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would read the ways and means motion and the press release that went with it, he would see it is clear that the people referred to will be exempt as long as they meet the requirements. It was all spelled out very clearly in the ways and means motion. I think either the hon. member did not read it or that he is acting in bad faith.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister: it relates to the recent meeting of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a body appointed by the government.

In view of the remarks made at that meeting by the president, who stated that she had come to the "tragic conclusion that not only were Canadian women being excluded from the employment strategy of the Canadian government," but that in "official statements" women are considered either "responsible for the high rate of unemployment" or are being "used as scapegoats and as a screen for a chronic inability to redress the economy", and in view of this level of criticism directed toward the government and its over-all economic policy of using women as scapegoats, has the Prime Minister asked for an immediate report from either the minister responsible for the status of women or from the Minister of Employment and Immigration about steps being taken to reverse this very serious situation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have had a report and I can state unequivocally that either the president was not directing her remarks at the government or else she was unequivocally wrong.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that these remarks were released officially by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and that there has been no public statement since suggesting that the remarks, which are very clearly an indication of criticism of the government, were not meant or intended, when the Prime Minister is inquiring about this, could he perhaps also find out why it has taken so long for the commitment to be honoured—made by the President of the Treasury Board and by the minister responsible for the status of women—to produce the annual reports on the achievement of equal opportunities for women in the various departments of government, as well as publishing the reports on the plan of action to which the government has committed itself?