

Oral Questions

particular mine will close, affecting that community not only in the short term but, indeed, in the long term.

I would have hoped that the minister responsible would have wanted to facilitate the collective bargaining process. In that regard I ask him to call upon the Minister of Labour to appoint Bill Kelly, former Deputy Minister of Labour, as the mediator in this particular settlement in order to have this matter resolved before we break for Christmas. I urge the minister to do this forthwith.

QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance confirmed to us today that the goods and services tax he is preparing for us is in flagrant contradiction with all the election promises made by the Conservatives during the last election campaign. We know today that all the Conservatives' election promises were completely false.

The Minister said during the election campaign that the tax would be revenue-neutral, that it would be brought in with the co-operation of the provinces, that it would be visible and the amount would appear on sales slips, that it would be easy to administer, that it would not be inflationary, that income tax rates for individuals would go down regardless of the rate set for the GST. Finally, Mr. Speaker, he said that the surtax on middle incomes would be abolished.

If the Minister really wants to reduce the deficit, if the Minister of Finance really wants to control the deficit, why does he not apply the GST to all the lies the Conservatives told in the last election campaign? Then our deficit would disappear overnight.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: There's no question there. Put a question. What a farce.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Mulroney: Just insults.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I did hear a lot of needless abuse. If we are going to have a debate on something like the GST, let's have a debate. We do not need this needless abuse.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Clancy: That's our line.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about visibility. He wants a visible tax. But the only alternative that I hear from the Liberal Party is to go back to the manufacturers' sales tax which is an absolutely invisible tax. No one in the country knows what it is, what it is on or how much it is.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): So much for the Liberal alternatives to this tax.

The second thing he talks about is revenue neutrality. What is his option there? Revenue neutrality I think in his terms would mean scrapping the goods and services tax—

• (1420)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —credit for low-income Canadians. I hear that the Liberal party wants to scrap the goods and services tax—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —credit for low-income Canadians. This is a very interesting revelation. We have been waiting for four months now to get the alternatives of the Liberal Party. Now they want to hit the low income Canadians. Well this government is not going to do that. This government is going to bring in the goods and services tax with a generous goods and services tax credit.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says he does not have to take this abuse. I say to him that the Canadian taxpayer does not want to take this abuse either.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was counselling his minister not to reply.