

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking for leadership. That is not leadership.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Finance. Once again, he puts a bunch of clips and quotes together. He knows that our leader has stated categorically that this tax will be undone when he is the prime minister of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mills: The Minister of Finance will not answer the question. He skirts the question. He diverges. Let us try a very simple question for the Minister of Finance.

The Small Businesses Loans Act, which could help small business in this country, needs reform. It is a policy initiative which everyone in this House agrees is a good policy initiative. When is he going to do something simple like trying to reform the Small Businesses Loans Act which can help that vital sector of our economy?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that John Chrétien is being absolutely categorical. I think that was the word he used, categorical. He said: "The GST will be on the table. There might be a GST, I don't know the result." Is that very categorical, Mr. Speaker? Or is it the same sort of cynical Liberal politics that in 1974 said: "We will not have wage and price controls". In 1975, what did we have? We had wage and price controls.

In January 1980: "We will not allow that 18-cent a gallon tax to go through". What did we have a few months later? Fifty, sixty, seventy cent-increase in the price of gas. Mr. Speaker, that is the sort of cynical—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. On September 20, I wrote to the Prime Minister requesting a full inquiry into the entire Kanesatake situation and related events at Kahnawake. On October 16 the Prime Minister said in this House, and I quote: "There is a motion to refer the whole matter to a parliamentary committee".

Is the federal government content with doing nothing, or will the Deputy Prime Minister commit the government today to establishing a full federal inquiry into this summer's tragic events?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has said, there was a motion before this House which the government wished to have brought to a vote, but which the opposition did not wish to have brought to a vote, and would have referred the whole matter to a committee of the House.

The hon. member knows, and other members of this House know, since this government implemented the reform of the committee system, committees are the masters of their own fate in the House of Commons. They may establish at any time any mandate that they wish which they feel is in the interest of the Canadian public.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer is totally unacceptable. It is cowardly, it is not directed—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. member does not want to use that kind of language. Would she please put her question.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Withdraw.

Ms. Blondin: Mr. Speaker, I direct my supplementary to the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell this House that a parliamentary inquiry is indeed justified and will be established? Will he quit beating around the bush?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the response that my colleague put forward to my question deserves an answer at this time, but I would wait until the end of Question Period to review what was said.

My colleague knows, as every member of this House knows, that it is within the power of every standing committee of the House of Commons to undertake work which they believe is important to the people of Canada.

I can inform the hon. member that if she would wish to bring that motion to a vote today, then I am sure there can be an arrangement between the House leaders respecting the motion that was put forward, which the government wished to bring to a vote but which the