

Oral Questions

question deals with the submission by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants to the MacDonal Royal Commission on the Economy, which stated in part:

There have been cases where Revenue Canada has threatened to assess more than the amount which it believes is proper as part of a bargaining process to get the taxpayer to accept what Revenue Canada regarded as proper. This is unreasonable duress to place on an individual or a corporation.

When will the Minister shake up his Department and return to the collecting of taxes in a fair, humane, and civil manner, for the sake of the livelihood of small businesses and individuals? I hear the Minister of Finance laughing at this question. If the Minister is not willing to make the shake up, why does he not step aside and let someone else take over, who will?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I have already responded to the accusation that there was over-assessment whenever an audit was made of certain taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, I have made sure that our auditing methods and practices lead to a fair determination of the amounts to be assessed. This is a principle that is fundamental to our taxpayer auditing system. Mr. Speaker, that concern has been expressed. If the Hon. Member looks at the terms of reference of the study to be made by Mr. W. A. Farlinger, he will realize that the study will be dealing with such issues. And since Mr. Farlinger is to start on this pretty soon, we shall have a very early diagnosis of such situations of concern and, if he finds any problems in the current practices, we shall be in a position to effect immediate correction if need be.

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CORPORATE SHAREHOLDING LIMITATION ACT

COMPETITION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. If I am not mistaken, I saw her a moment ago behind the curtain. The Minister recently stated in the House that she intends to introduce a new competition policy. I would like to know whether we will again find in the bill—but I hope not—some provision which would revive Bill S-31?

[*English*]

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the Leader of the Opposition that there is no connection between the proposed competition Bill and S-31.

[*Translation*]

BILL S-31—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): By implication, does the Government intend directly or indirectly to introduce some bill or provision which would revive Bill S-31? Has it tried to proceed in another way?

[*English*]

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is not at the moment a Government priority, but I would bring to the attention of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that the problem does exist. We encourage him to come forward with suggestions on how to improve S-31.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Last supplementary question.

Mr. Mulroney: The problem exists in the mind of the Government. Otherwise, there would be no problem. The Minister knows perfectly well that Bill S-31 has rightly given rise to a general outcry throughout Quebec from every group of our society. The people of Quebec have told the Government that they do not want Bill S-31 or anything like it. Taking this into consideration as well as the very reasonable comments made by Quebecers of all political hues, does the Government intend to introduce in the next several weeks or months a bill similar to Bill S-31 which would be as prejudicial as that bill?

[*English*]

Mrs. Erola: Mr. Speaker, again I would like to reassure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is not a government priority. When he talks about provocation I would suggest to him that much of that provocation was led by the Leader of the Opposition and his Party, based on some very false assumptions. I suggest to him again that there is a great deal of work to be done in that entire area. It rests on the Members of the Opposition to do that homework.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has already allowed the Leader of the Opposition two supplementary questions. The tradition of the House is to allow two supplementary questions. The Chair will allow one last supplementary question.

Mr. Mulroney: The Minister has referred to provocation from this side of the House. She may rest assured that whenever she dares introduce a bill which could prove detrimental to the best interests of Quebecers, we will be there to fight her.

My question is as follows: Since this does not appear to be a priority for the Minister, could we have her assurance that there will be no Bill S-31 or its alter ego to deal with during the next few weeks and months of this session?