

*Oral Questions*

this government has decided to exempt its own cabinet policies from environmental review, will whoever is the Acting Prime Minister today take this opportunity to reverse publicly this odious decision?

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry):** Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend knows, the Minister of the Environment is attending a very important international conference.

However, he did answer a similar question that the hon. member posed last week in the House before he left in which he reiterated the government's commitment to place before the House and the country a very comprehensive plan and the government's new policy which will reflect not only the government's commitment to a new ethic but also the programs that we intend to initiate in terms of the ERP review process.

The details of the legislation are still in cabinet. The hon. member will have to await the outcome of the final determination.

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Acting Prime Minister. I do not know whether that is my friend Frank or not.

Earlier today an alliance led by Greenpeace, representing more than a million Canadians, called for a royal commission on the national emergency facing Canada's forests. Perhaps unknown to most Canadians, Canadian forests are disappearing to fire and clear cutting at a rate comparable to that in the Amazon—one acre every five seconds.

I wonder if someone on the government side, perhaps the Acting Prime Minister, might announce that there will in fact be a royal commission of inquiry into Canada's most valuable natural resource, our forests.

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry):** Perhaps if my hon. friend would reflect on what the government has done over the last five years in terms of developing the necessary strategic alliances with industry and the provinces which have, after all, the principal and the first line of responsibility for the custodianship of the resources that lie within their scope of jurisdiction, the hon. member would recognize that much has been done.

This year 1.2 billion trees will be planted. Some of the policies that we have been able to put in place over the last five years are showing very impressive results.

Perhaps the hon. member would wait for the final assessment of the progress that has been made over the last five years before he would call or join the chorus for a royal commission.

\* \* \*

**INCOME TAX REFUNDS**

**Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre):** Mr. Speaker, constituents of mine from the riding of Simcoe Centre have made numerous inquiries on the status of badly needed tax refunds they are expecting from Revenue Canada.

I would like to ask the Minister of National Revenue what he is doing to provide accurate information to Canadians regarding the status of their individual tax refunds in order to reassure them that they will receive the money owed in a timely and efficient manner.

**Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member could be aware, we have processed a record number of 6.2 million refunds as of April 30 due to the improvements in our productivity efforts in order to assist the taxpayer.

• (1450)

Nevertheless, I would like to point out to the hon. member that starting tomorrow, as a matter of fact, all taxpayers will be able to take advantage of a tele-refund program, which is a national computerized service, which will provide up-to-date information on any refund services to the taxpayer.

This is yet another step to improve productivity and to make the system fairer and simpler for Canadian taxpayers.

\* \* \*

**NEW HORIZONS**

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.