

Routine Proceedings

It is interesting to note that the only major change to enhance worker safety in the last year has been the result of the private members' bill introduced by Lynn McDonald, the former New Democratic MP, which limited smoking in many of the workplaces across Canada, and passed by the House.

Other than that, the federal government has not taken any serious initiative. There has been no new legislation. It has not passed my private members' bill which I re-introduced on April 11 of last year with regard to a day of mourning. In addition, as was previously mentioned, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has been made a user-pay operation and the federal funding is being completely eliminated. Only those organizations and those workers who can afford to pay for information are going to be aware of the dangers that exist in the work site. That goes against everything that the Solicitor General said in his statement.

If the workers, their unions and the people involved in an operation are unaware of the risk that they face, then improvements are not going to take place. If funding for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety is going to depend on those organizations that can afford to pay for the information, then it is going to become a tool of management. It is not going to be available for the workers, their families or the people in the communities affected.

It was a very sad decision that the federal government made. It affects the work and health of workers right across the country. I would say that today would have been an appropriate day for the minister to announce that there would be funding for this centre, a centre which I have toured myself, which many workers have used in the past, and which is providing a very good and necessary service for Canadians. It really makes a hypocrisy of the minister's statement to see what the government has actually done.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the minister and both hon. members for their interventions on this matter.

It has become customary in the House that at this time we should stand and take a minute's silence to remember our fellow Canadians who have died in the workplace.

[Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.]

OMBUDSMAN ACT**MEASURE TO ENACT**

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-297, an act to establish the office of the ombudsman, and amending acts in consequence thereof.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the hon. member have leave to introduce the said bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to introduce a private members' bill. The purpose of this bill is to establish the institution of a federal ombudsman who would deal with specific complaints from the public against administrative injustices and maladministration, and who would have the power to investigate, criticize, and publicize but not to reverse administrative action.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

PETITIONS**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 882 Canadians who want to express their grievance, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to the government's proposal to institute a goods and services tax or, as is now affectionately known, a grief and suffering tax.

These Canadians call upon the government to immediately withdraw this regressive program and they ask that Parliament reject any proposal for the goods and services tax.

* * *

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 260 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.