

Government Orders

element has not been met. The Minister of Finance says we can trust the government because from time to time it will adjust those credits to make sure they are fair.

Let us review what the Minister of Finance and the government were saying themselves, not what the opposition was saying. Specific undertakings of the government were that the tax would be visible. It is not visible. It can be visible but it does not have to be visible. Another undertaking was that it will be fair where credits are not indexed; that it will be revenue neutral where there is no guarantee of that because experience elsewhere showed us other things.

We come to the last point and that is integration. One of the things that the Minister of Finance of the government said had to happen with this goods and services tax is that there had to be provincial participation. The provinces as recently as last weekend said no to an integrated national sales tax system.

I submit that the reason we have had to proceed on the basis we have, of eliminating the bill in its entirety, is because the tax is not visible as was promised by the government. It is not fair as was promised by the government because credits are not indexed. It is not integrated with provincial retail tax collection systems because the provinces have refused to do it. There is absolutely no guarantee that it will be revenue neutral.

I believe that the government should take the advice of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, all of whom in various ways and the minister well knows, support the principle of this tax, but say that because of the nature of the problems he faces and the kind of bill he has brought forward, the tax should be withdrawn.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting afternoon waiting to have a chance to speak about this bad legislation, Bill C-62.

We have some 80 amendments before us this afternoon. I see the Minister of Finance here and I understand there have been some discussions both by himself and the Minister of the Environment and cabinet regarding the convenience of using environmental concerns in Canada by stalling the Minister of Environment's five-year plan until the fall. They know from the polling and

the tracking of the polling in the last few years that Canadians are prepared to pay higher taxes and higher costs to clean up the environment for clean drinking water, to clean up the atmosphere, to clean up toxic and hazardous waste, dumpsites, and to clean up the Great Lakes.

There are many areas where Canadians are prepared to pay higher taxes and higher costs. There is a Machiavellian nature to the timing of this of this bill. This fall the \$14 million in advertising on the GST really gets rolling and this so-called double window of public consultation will take place in April and May and June and with provincial and territorial governments, leading to the Minister of the Environment's plan in the fall.

The hope of the Minister of Finance and the government is to try to meld the two issues, the desire of Canadians to clean up the environment with the unpopularity of the GST, by trying to squeak them through with some greater degree of public support into next January. I think that plan is likely to fail because certainly people in the environment community have recognized very quickly the ridiculousness of the position in which the Minister of the Environment has placed himself and the Conservative government. Let us take a look, Mr. Speaker, at the key reasons for the unpopularity of the GST in Bill C-62. I will come back obviously on another occasion dealing with the broader aspects of the debate that we had here last fall, which was to have a GTS instead of a GST, a green tax system, something that has been looked at by economists who have some understanding of the gravity of the globe's plight. Unfortunately nobody on the front benches of this government seem to have any understanding of it whatsoever, whether it is the plight of the ozone or in terms of greenhouse warming.

We see the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources sitting here today after his recent meetings in Kananaskis. We on this side of the House recognize that he has absolutely no understanding of the severity of the problems of carbon dioxide and methane and CFCs and other greenhouse gases on the atmosphere. It is a very flat earth approach to simply say: "Well, we will wait until 1992. We will wait till Brazil or we will wait until 1995 or we will wait till the year 2000". It is the famous shell game.