

In terms of the member's question in relation to tax incentives for those who are participating, that would not be the best approach. The best approach in fact is to apply the green tax system in relation to the resource sectors and in relation to industries themselves because the principle that is involved in ecologically sound taxation policies is to make sure that certain principles are adhered to; minimizing the amount of energy used, minimizing the amount of waste that is produced from any particular product, applying certain sound internationally respected principles such as using closed circuit technologies to make sure that persistent, toxic and bioaccumulative materials do not continue to go on to the land, into the marine environment or into the atmosphere.

The principal intention of a green tax system is and should be implemented by the Government of Canada in order to reduce waste and to move our technologies to the cutting edge. I think many of the stocks, shares and so on that would be found within an ethically sound mutual fund would be of those technologies, industries and social developments that are on the cutting edge and have been encouraged to do so by a green tax system.

The reason we do not have more accessibility and availability of renewable energy sources in this country is that it is not encouraged by the present tax system. The government has not only closed down access to public information in relation to the renewable sector, but in fact funding for R and D and so on has also been cut off. That is direct discouragement. On the other hand there is direct encouragement, through the funding of billions of dollars from Canadian taxpayers, to the nuclear and fossil fuel sectors which are now being demonstrated to be the least beneficial option either in terms of cost or energy efficiency.

The member's point on a green crop, I suppose you might call it, is one that I think Canada must look at with a much greater vigour because there are things in every single province and in both territories that require the serious address of not only young people, but society as a whole. It is often best to involve young people, either at the high school age or in the years immediately following high school, whether in terms of replanting stream banks to improve fisheries habitat or simply planting different species of trees.

### *Supply*

There should be scientific people along who talk not only about the commercial nature of the various species that are being planted, but the benefits to fish, birds and to wildlife and also the growing threat to the planet in terms of global warming and the greenhouse effect. The process of simply replanting trees is helping to get a larger carbon sink growing that takes more of that out of the atmosphere.

• (1150 )

In terms of ecological mutual funds, I think there is a direct relation to a green tax system in that a green tax system is ethically appropriate.

I think one of the most repugnant self-admissions by our present Minister of Finance is that he has admitted that the GST, whether it is 5 per cent or 9 per cent, is a regressive form of taxation. Why, at this point, would we be making some of the more ecologically expensive and devastating industries in terms of the long term for future generations more expensive and less likely to be able to redesign, retool and refit to make themselves, at the very least, ecologically and environmentally benign?

I think there is a great parallel between ethical mutual funds and the ethics that one finds in the kind of taxation I am talking about in terms of a green tax system.

**Mr. Friesen** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think we should correct the record. I do not think the Minister of Finance has ever said that the GST is regressive.

**Mr. Riis:** Yes he has.

**Mr. Fulton:** He admitted it in here.

**Mr. Riis:** He said it in the House.

**Mr. Friesen:** I think he has misquoted the Minister of Finance.

I think the member's point is well taken in some areas. I think all of us are dismayed at the amount of styrofoam, for example, that McDonald's uses and the abuse of paper products by that corporation. Dr. David Suzuki has certainly made that point very well. He has also made the point that McDonald's gets much of its beef from Brazil to feed our hunger for red meat. He has labelled McDonald's as one of the great contributors to environmental problems.

In some ways you cannot argue with that. But at the same time McDonald's also is using its forum to have people send in coupons to oppose the GST. Now here you have an organization that is a polluter also opposing