

*Adjournment Debate*

tries in Atlantic Canada, one of the largest industries in Nova Scotia and one, thank goodness, that was doing fairly well. We have a lot to attract visitors there.

What the minister opposite failed to realize was that in Atlantic Canada, in Nova Scotia in particular, of 1,222,000 who visited that province between May 15 and October 31, 1988, fully 74 per cent or 903,000 of those visitors were Canadians.

The incredible response that I received in the House to my question on October 2 was the minister basically saying that for the first time in history this government was going to treat foreigners better than Canadians. He said that if you come from the United States of America, the government will not tax you, but if you are part of the 74 per cent or almost one million Canadians who are seeking a seaside holiday and choose to come to Nova Scotia to enjoy it and to spend money in my province, you will be taxed.

It was absolutely shameful for the minister to stand up and think that he was delivering good news. It certainly showed that he knew very little, if anything, about his portfolio. He certainly showed that day that he knew nothing about the tourism sector in Nova Scotia.

The tourism industry and its representatives in Nova Scotia have spoken against the goods and services tax. They spoke against it when it was proposed by this government. They spoke against it when the finance committee met in Halifax, when it was at that point a proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax. Since that period in time, the government has lowered it to 7 per cent and thinks that everybody is going to swallow that. Government members like to stand up and state that the tourism sector, or the restaurant sector, are really in support of the GST as long as it does not affect them, or as long as the rate is low.

Quite clearly, they do not even read the the press. They have not even read, or if they have, they have not understood, what has been said at the finance committee hearings. I refer to the *Chronicle Herald* of Saturday, January 20, 1990, where the headline states: "TIANS drops GST support". The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia stated:

"As far as prices are concerned, there is no question the GST will be devastating to the tourism industry", Gordon Harmer, the group's chief executive officer, said Friday in an interview.

He also stated:

The national group predicts the GST will rip \$1 billion out of Canada's tourism industry and force at least 25,000 people out of work.

Yet when I asked my question in the House of the minister who should have been responsible for tourism, he stood in his place and told me that things have never been so good. He said: "Don't worry about it because the people who are coming from the United States are not going to be taxed".

What I have said in this House before is that this government's goods and services tax is going to absolutely cripple and devastate the tourism industry in Nova Scotia and across Canada. What the government is going to do with its goods and services tax, this brilliant piece of Toryism, is drive Canadians who are seeking a seaside holiday state-side. The only people who will benefit from the 7 per cent goods and service will be some of President Bush's buddies in Kennebunkport. When Canadians are considering a holiday and want some Atlantic seaboard hospitality, they will go to Maine where they do not have to pay a 7 per cent tax. That is exactly what they are going to do.

• (1805)

With the figures that I have put forward in the House tonight as a further elaboration of my question, surely the minister or the parliamentary secretary will be able to give me a better answer. Surely to goodness since October 2 they have had an opportunity to check the facts. Surely to goodness since October 2 they have had a chance to check the record and to consult with some people in the tourism industry. I look forward to their response today. The only reasonable response is for the Conservative Government to drop the goods and services tax because it knows that nobody in this country supports it, and that the one growth industry that it has not been able to cripple so far is the Atlantic Canadian tourism industry.

I look forward to a very positive reply from my colleagues on the opposite side of the House. I am sure that the logic and the facts that I have just given them would show any reasonable individual that the goods and services tax will be devastating to the tourism industry in Atlantic Canada, in particular in Nova Scotia, and that