

Oral Questions

continue spouting this incorrect information which is leading senior citizens astray.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the minister attend the next food bank for senior citizens in Montreal and explain his views to them.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: The minister refers to the brochure—a brochure which cost taxpayers \$1.3 million—sent out to businesses and ensuring small businesses that they will have, and I quote, “lower operating costs, improved cash flow and a more competitive edge”.

I suggest that the minister is not going to have any better luck explaining his position to small business than he is to senior citizens.

My question is simple. Has the government taken into account the expected lost revenue in its budget preparations? Has it told small business that the goods and services tax means lost business?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes reference to one particular item. She says that it will not improve their cash flow. She is referring to the part in this document which shows that it will do that; that it will improve their cash flow.

If she disagrees with that, if she can produce the figures to show me that that is the case, that shows me that this is wrong, then I would like to see those figures.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Is the Minister aware of the status of the trucking industry in Canada at the present time which is engaged in an absolute fight for its very existence, a fight brought about by high costs, regulatory structure and because of the total Canadian tax structure?

How can our trucking industry compete for contracts under these conditions? Will he now admit that present government policies have created conditions which are forcing the Canadian trucking industry to move to the United States in order to compete?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is wrong, first because since deregulation, the trucking industry has experienced considerable growth. He also ought to know that the provinces now have more responsibilities and broader jurisdiction in the trucking sector, that there is co-operation with the provinces, and that we are trying, both through the highway safety code, the legislation and the agreements we have in the trucking sector, to help the industry continue to develop. In any case, I can give the hon. member the assurance that especially since deregulation, the industry has experienced considerable growth in this country, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ about who is understanding the trucking industry the best.

In the last two months Ford Motor Co. of Windsor has given \$50 million out of \$55 million worth of business to United States trucking firms.

The owner of the fifth largest Canadian trucking company is in my riding, Canada Transport of Belleville. He has moved 250 jobs in the last two months to the United States of America because he cannot compete under the present conditions in this country.

What has the government done and what is it going to do to keep the Canadian trucking industry in Canada?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will maintain what I said before.

The trucking industry in Canada has known since 1985 about the developments. We have had rationalization in the industry, which we know very well. We are once again working with the provinces.

I should add also that the trucking industry under the GST will be a clear winner.

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[*Translation*]

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister promised that before April 19 this year, he would grant letters patent so that American Express