

Oral Questions

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in a previous incarnation, if I recall, brought changes to this program. Everything we did in the decision announced last week follows a court decision of the Federal Court of Canada and a period of review which involved extensive consultations with both employers and employees in question.

We have taken the decision to reconfirm the thrust of this program because there is a labour market need in Canada.

• (1450)

My prime concern under the program was to provide these persons with the protection they need. With the counselling measures that are being introduced in the new program, it will allow for a more secure environment for these workers.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, let the record show that I have in my hand letters from various organizations representing domestic workers and asking why the government has not consulted with them.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the same minister. According to a study by Employment and Immigration, the government is concerned that most domestics come from the Third World. It doesn't matter where they come from: these women do an excellent job. Why is the government slamming the door on women from the Third World? Why doesn't it withdraw these unfair measures and consult with foreign domestics to improve the program?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says this closes the door on part-time workers from the Third World, but I may remind the hon. member that these people who come to Canada as temporary workers may eventually become Canadian citizens. Considering how vital certain qualifications are in order to enter the labour market, it is in the best interests of the people concerned and of this country to have people with better qualifications and that was the purpose of asking these workers to have the equivalent of Grade 12.

[English]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I might say through you to the Minister of State for Small Businesses that if there is no news in what the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca said, perhaps the minister could table the document he is referring to under tabling of documents in 15 minutes time.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Surely the Prime Minister must realize that the GST is bleeding the country to death. Retail outlets are shutting down all over the place, people are cross-border shopping *en masse*, and the Prime Minister says that there are no alternatives to the GST.

I ask the Prime Minister: Doesn't he realize that if he was not bought and paid for by the Business Council on National Issues there would be lots of alternatives to the GST?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would put his question.

Mr. Blaikie: I ask the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance, if they are looking for alternatives to the GST—

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member put his question.

Mr. Blaikie: Will the Minister of Finance consider as an alternative to the GST getting rid of the manufacturing tax credit, the dividend tax credit, the interest deductibility rule, the business and entertainment tax structure, and a variety of other loopholes and tax shelters that we have been suggesting for months as an alternative to the GST?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand the New Democratic Party continually harping like an old broken record when it knows at least six royal commissions, all-party parliamentary studies and committees categorically concluded that the old manufacturers' sales tax had to be replaced. The question was whether to raise taxes, raise deficits, or replace it with a modern tax like the value-added tax used in 48 other countries.