

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, the information that we have is that answer is simply not true and not correct.

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** I take it that the hon. member is saying that the answer is not inaccurate. Perhaps the hon. member could clarify his position and put the question.

**Mr. Kristiansen:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. In view of the information that we have, that answer is not accurate.

My supplementary question, in this case is directed to the Minister of Labour. If the Minister of Labour had done his job and proclaimed Parts II and III of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, which was passed by this House four and one-half years ago, then our employees would have the right to know and to act, and we would not have this problem.

When will the Minister of Labour do his job as Parliament directed and give our employees the same basic health and safety rights as all other workers in Canada have? Will he have Part III of that act proclaimed now?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour and Minister of State (Transport)):** Mr. Speaker, one would believe that the hon. member would know that the proclamation of the act is not the responsibility of the Minister of Labour.

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**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, the goods and services tax will be disproportionately brutal on the north. Northerners pay more than those in the south, 40 per cent more, generally.

Now the GST is threatening the economic viability of northern publishing companies which have developed a successful industry by using northern authors and settings. It is clear these concerned northern citizens are in the hands and at the mercy of the government.

Will the acting Minister of Finance recommend that books be exempted from the GST to alleviate the unbearable pressure on publishers and consumers from the north and across Canada?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, to begin with, I would not share the analysis made by my hon. colleague.

**Ms. Blondin:** You don't live there.

**Mr. Loiselle:** It is not a fact that such will be the effect of the GST. Obviously, she has been listening to her colleagues. She should listen to us.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Loiselle:** As my colleague, the Minister of Finance, has indicated many times, one of the heavy costs of living in the north is transport. The hon. member knows very well that people who bring things to the north have to pay a very heavy federal sales tax, which will be removed after implementation of the GST, hopefully very soon.

Credits will be available to members of certain communities. Notably, Indian communities in the north will have credits while not having to pay as much tax as other Canadians. I think on the whole they will be better off after reform.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear. I have just returned from the Northwest Territories where one of my constituents said to me that northerners this winter will pay \$150 to \$200 more to have their fuel tanks filled this winter. Try that on for size.

The cost of transportation is not going down. The cost of fur is going down. Unemployment is going up. The cost of living in the north is 40 per cent more than it is in the south.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, the government fully intends to make changes to the goods and services act. We also know the government intends to tax all goods and services in the north, including transportation services.

Why will the government not exempt northern goods and services that are so vital to northern residents? Why does the minister opposite not take the opportunity to be merciful and listen to northerners who speak the truth?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.